

NOTES

ON

HUDSON'S MILTON AND HIS POETRY

*Designed for Students preparing for the B A. Examination
of the Allahabad University*

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MILTON AND HIS POETRY

(SUMMARY OF THE PROSE PART)

The Reformation work in England was carried out by people of conservative temper, hence no catastrophical changes were made in religious matters when the Papacy was rejected. The continuity of religious tradition was preserved as far as possible. There were two parties in England at that time—those who were opposed to change, and those who wanted to deal a death-blow to Catholicism—while the majority were in favour of a moderate policy. Those who belonged to the second party were the precursors of Puritanism.

Elements of discord, which were present in church and country, were held in check for some time owing to certain public events—e.g., the struggle with Rome and Spain—when people gave up their private contentions, and made a common cause. Elizabeth tried her best to stop the progress of Puritanism, but she failed. However at the close of her reign conditions gave hope of lasting peace.

But these were thwarted when, on account of a quarrel on church questions which broke out between the Puritans and James I, some three hundred clergymen were expelled from their livings. James and his son, Charles I, made persistent efforts to kill the Puritan spirit, but that spirit continued to spread among the Commons and the middle classes of people. The licentiousness of the Court and the aristocracy greatly strengthened the moral ideals of Puritanism, and gave it a national colour. Puritanism became political because religious questions became closely intertwined with questions of secular Government. The Puritans put faith only in the power of God and the supremacy of His law, and stoutly resisted the undue claims of the Stuarts. The Stuarts' notion of kingship (the divine right)—the tyranny of Charles—and the repressive

policy of Archbishop Laud led many people, who had no sympathy with the Puritans, to join them in opposing a despotic king and a 'dictatorial' church. The Puritans thus emerged at a time when the liberties of the English people were seriously endangered, and they rendered valuable service to the England of their own day as well as to the succeeding generations.

Puritanism produced vast and far-reaching changes in the temper of English society. It evolved a noble but stern and hard type of character, and occupied people's attention with the most narrowly religious aspects of man's conduct, aims, and destiny, and, in consequence, was averse to art, science, humane culture etc. Thus, amid much that was good it had a tendency towards fanaticism, moroseness and gloom. Puritanism regarded all earthly things as "vain and fleeting shows" and it was thus fatal to art and harmful to literature. The literature which it produced bore the distinct impress of its limitations—e.g., Shakespeare's drama deals in the spirit of the largest tolerance with human life, but it has little reference "to anything that may lie beyond it in the sphere of the unseen," Bunyan tells us about the trials and temptations of this world, while Milton's *Paradise Lost* attempts to "justify the ways of God to men."

"England, alone of European nations, received the influences of both Renaissance and Reformation simultaneously." The two movements had a common origin, yet, in spite of that, the spirit of the Revival of Learning came into conflict with the spirit of the Reformation when religion began to separate itself from humane culture, and vice versa, until the rupture was complete.

Milton has been spoken of as "not only the highest, but the completest type of Puritanism." He was born when Puritanism began to exercise a direct power over English politics and English religion, he died when its effort to mould them into its own shape was over, and when it had again sunk into one of the many influences to which (the English) owe their character." Milton and his work can be properly understood by the recognition

of these facts and the intimate relations between him and the public movements of his time

II

Though a Londoner by birth, John Milton came of an Oxfordshire yeomen stock His father was a prosperous scrivener Milton was born on December 9, 1608, at his father's house in Bread Street, Cheapside.

Although he had leanings towards Puritanism, Milton's father was not averse to literature and art The poet was, therefore, brought up in an atmosphere of liberal culture and refinement He grew up a wonderfully beautiful boy. Milton transferred his own experiences to his dramatic characters, and the words he put on the lips of Christ in *Paradise Regained* (I 201-207), were due to his own experiences as a child

Milton was educated privately by an excellent tutor, Thomas Young, and then sent to St Paul's School From the beginning he devoted himself with whole-hearted enthusiasm to his studies, and laid the foundation of his immense learning and of that complaint of the eyes which resulted in blindness "He acquired a proficiency in various languages" - Latin, Greek, French, Hebrew, and English.

While a school boy Milton tried his hand at writing verses, but his first attempts gave no unusual promise Perhaps the most interesting thing about his paraphrase of Psalm 136 is the fact that in some lines "he touches the plain simplicity of the original poem with ideas derived from classical Mythology and quite foreign to the temper of the Hebrew mind" - a sign of the union of the Hebraic and the classical which was afterwards a marked feature of his work.

Milton entered Christ's College, Cambridge, took the B A. Degree in 1629, and became a Master of Arts in 1632 His College life was not altogether pleasant - in fact he never loved Cambridge He had to leave Cambridge for a time on account of a trouble between him and his College tutor, but he returned after a short time. His College companions called him "the Lady" on account of his

fair complexion and personal beauty, and the purity of his life and conversation. The nickname displeased Milton as reflecting upon his manliness, but he showed his manliness "by living modestly and temperately." His *Lycidas* is of autobiographical interest in that it tells us something about his life at Cambridge.

Milton wrote some poems at College but most of them are of an occasional character and rather slight, in general immature, and sometimes even clumsy, in expression, but they give promise of his future greatness. Among these the ode "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," which was written in 1629, stands out supreme. It has been called one of the very finest odes in the language, but the implied praise is excessive. The piece is imperfect. It is rugged in metre and unequal in style and is often marred by conceits. But in spite of its faults it is "a great poem, vigorous in thought and language," often indeed splendid in diction, and occasionally even rising into that grand manner which was to be one of the outstanding qualities of Milton's mature work. The poet enriches his subject with his learning, and arranges his materials with great skill. The poem is an "organic whole," and shows "that already Milton was a conscientious and painstaking poetic artist."

The poem testifies to the sobriety of the poet's temper and to his interest in religious things. Yet it does not foreshadow his later Puritanism. Its curious blending of Christian thought and classical imagery and ideas is due to the spirit of the Renaissance. The two great influences which were to fashion his poetic powers were the influence of classicism and the influence of Puritanism. The Hebraic zeal for righteousness in Milton was combined with a true Hellenic feeling for beauty and love of knowledge. These were present in his poetry in very different proportions at different stages of his career, but he started with the Hellenic. Yet in his sonnet "On his having Twenty-three" which is "one of the most solemn and beautiful pieces of personal writing in English poetry," the Hebrew or Puritan note is distinctly struck. This sonnet marked the close of his College career, and he entered life in a spirit of self-dedication.

III

Milton's father had designed that he should enter the church; but being dissatisfied with the ecclesiasticism of his time, Milton saw that it was impossible for him to enter the church. He next thought of Law, but only to give it up. Finally he determined to devote himself to study, self-culture, and poetry because he confidently believed that poetry was his true calling. In this he had the full support of his father.

Milton spent six years of scholarly seclusion—July 1632 to April 1638—at Horton in Buckinghamshire where his father had bought a country house, and devoted himself with matchless persistence and single-heartedness to self-preparation for his future work. He studied history and all that was best in modern and ancient literatures, and his learning was as wide as it was accurate. His learning, according to Hartley Coleridge, was amalgamated and consubstantiated with his native thought, but he did not employ it in a pedantic spirit, although he paid little regard to the ignorance of the average reader. When his learning was fired by the imagination, it poured out profusely into his verse.

The 'Horton period' was a time of production also. The list of the poems he wrote during this period opens with the sonnet—*To The Nightingale* (1632), which possesses both grace and charm. In 1633 he wrote *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. Though each of these poems is complete in itself, they are wrought as studies in contrast. Nature, art, and human life are interpreted in them as they are seen in the moods of gladness and pensive melancholy. Two ideal days are represented—the ideal day of a gay youth and that of a serious minded youngman. Though both pictures are painted with an abandonment to the prevailing mood, still it is easily perceived that *Il Penseroso* is more after Milton's mind than the other. The two poems are singularly pure and noble in spirit. There is much that is anti-Puritan in both of them—(e.g. in *L'Allegro* the echoes of romance, the dancing and rustic sports, and the references to the play-house, and in *Il Penseroso* the love of pagan learning, enjoyment furnished by the beauty of the dim aisles of the cathedral, the

Milton wrote the poem keeping in view the conditions of his time. Comus and his crew represent the license of Charles's Court and fashionable society, and the lady and her brothers represent the types of sobriety and temperance of the true religious life. In the brothers we may see Milton's large, generous, humane, and deeply religious ideal of Puritanism. The Hellenic and the Hebraic elements are now beginning to change their relative proportions, the form is Hellenic, but the matter and purpose show the growth of his Hebraism.

Comus lends a fresh interest if we keep the personal aspects of it in mind. The principal actors in it were the Earl's children, and Laves, and the charming compliments which the poet cleverly pays have an interest of their own if the personal aspects of the poem are taken into consideration.

After writing "Comus" Milton gave up writing poetry for sometime, and determined to write some grand poem which should make him immortal. But in spite of his determination not to write anything till his "mellowing year" had come, a sudden occasion obliged him to write Lycidas.

Among Milton's companions at Christ's College had been an amiable young man, named Edward King, who had a brilliant College career, and was popular with all who knew him. He prepared to enter the Church, but Fate willed otherwise. In 1637 he sailed from Chester Bay to visit relatives in Ireland, but the ship sank, and King perished. His death was a sad shock to his friends who perpetuated his memory in a book of memorial verses. Milton contributed Lycidas to it.

Lycidas is a pastoral elegy and is directly connected with the Renaissance and its classicism. Milton follows closely the lines of Greek pastoral elegy in adopting the convention of a lamenting shepherd, the bucolic tone and manner and all other pastoral details of the academic form. Johnson finds faults with the poem for its want of nature and truth but he does not make any allowance for the tastes of Milton's age which consisted of classically trained readers. Masson says, "Through the guise of all the pastoral

circumstances and imagery there is a studious representation of the facts of King's brief life and his accidental death, and of Milton's regard for him, and academic intimacy with him.'

Like "Comus" *Lycidas* is the vehicle of a religious and ethical spirit which is foreign to the art and learning of the Renaissance. In *Lycidas* Milton is definitely Puritan. His militant and ecclesiastical Puritanism is clearly seen in the passage of denunciation spoken by St. Peter. Critics say that this fierce attack upon the clergy of the time is not consistent with the body of the monody, and that it is fatal to unity of feeling and tone. But even if it be out of place it has an autobiographical interest. To understand the significance of the denunciation we must remember the events which had brought about a change in Milton's mind—the encroachments made by the king and his counsellors upon the constitutional and religious liberties of the people, the king's absolutism and his leanings towards Catholicism, and Laud's rigid determination to establish uniformity of public ritual. Such was the state of things when Milton wrote *Lycidas*, and he denounced the clergy because his soul was filled with burning indignation.

Lycidas marks the close of Milton's first period of poetic production. We can trace in the poems he wrote at Horton the gradual movements of his mind towards Puritanism. Each one of his poems written at Horton shows him a different man as regards his temper and attitude to life. "Nothing of the Renaissance is left now but its learning and its art." But we must remember that Milton became a Puritan without ceasing to be a humanist.

IV

In 1638 Milton started for a tour upon the continent. He went first to Paris, thence to Nice, Genoa and Florence, passing through Leghorn and Pisa. In Florence he associated with men of rank and learning. Then he went to Rome, enjoying the antiquities of the city and the society of men prominent in literature and scholarship. Then he pushed on to Naples, but could not visit Athens because the political and religious struggles at home compelled him to return to England. He spent two months in Rome and Florence each, and

time being by writing pamphlets, so he became an active and influential prose-writer and controversialist setting aside his poetic designs for the time being.

In 1643 Milton married Mary Powell, a "common place and rather giddy girl." This was a step taken without forethought and consequently domestic troubles arose. Their tempers were different, and Mrs. Milton came of a cavalier family. Misunderstandings at once arose, and his wife went to her parents promising to return by Michaelmas but her overstaying brought about a rupture between the two. Reconciliation, however, took place between them and in 1645 Mrs. Milton returned to her husband's home. Milton had the scene of the reconciliation before his mind when he wrote in *Paradise Lost* (X, 937 .) of the reconciliation of Adam and Eve. The reunion was not a very happy one. That there had been faults on both sides must be admitted. Milton possessed magnanimity in no small measure, and the fact that in 1646 he took the impoverished Powells into his household, goes to his credit. He had a big family now, including among others, his father, and three children, Anne, Mary, and Deborah. His father died in 1647 and his wife in 1653.

Such was Milton's private life when, before 1641 and 1645, he was writing his pamphlets on Church Government "*Areopagitica*" and his tractates on education and divorce works which throw light on his personality and aims. These prose writings (with the exception of "*Areopagitica*") are full of the spirit of partisanship, bitterness and gross personal abuse. Milton himself confessed that they were the work of his "left hand," and their style is consequently involved, cumbersome and heavy. But they are all marked by "noble earnestness, passionate intensity of feeling and bursts of splendid eloquence," though their issues have to day little more than historical interest. Milton was moved to write the "*Areopagitica*" in defence of freedom of thought and an unlicensed Press because in 1643 the Government forbade the reprinting, publication and importation of unlicensed publications. Mr Stopford Brooke says in regard to the "*Areopagitica*," its defence of books.

and the freedom of books, will last as long as there are writers and readers of books" The *Areopagitica* differs from Milton's other prose writings in the permanence of its interest, still it is at one with them in its inspiration and purpose *viz.* liberty Milton perceived that there were three species of liberty—religious, domestic, and civil His pamphlets on Church Government in which he took the side of the radicals were his contributions to the cause of religious liberty He did not touch civil liberty because the magistrates were trying hard to obtain it According to him domestic liberty involved "three material questions—the conditions of the conjugal tie, the education of children, and the free publication of thoughts" Milton's tract on education is based upon the principle that a proper training in virtue is "the only genuine source of political and individual liberty" In his four tractates on divorce he boldly attacks the doctrine of the indissolubility of marriage-bond, and maintains that it can justly be dissolved for "indisposition, unfitness, or contrariety of mind" Though many of his friends objected to his ideas still Milton had the moral courage to enunciate them He held that men were superior to women, and his ideal of marriage and its responsibilities was singularly high and pure

In 1615 Land was executed The same year the Royalists were defeated in the battle of Naseby Charles fled to Scotland, but was beheaded in 1649 After him a Commonwealth was established, and in 1653 Cromwell was made Lord Protector At first Milton held aloof from the distracting conflicts, but the execution of the king turned his energies towards public affairs He published a pamphlet entitled "The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates" to justify the army in Charles's trial and death The publication drew the attention of the authorities to its writer, and he was appointed Latin Secretary to the Committee for Foreign Affairs The publication entitled "Eikon Basilike," the Portraiture of his sacred Majesty in his solitude and sufferings, which was said to have been written by Charles but now believed to have been written by a Dr. Gauden, stimulated popular feeling in favour of Charles I, and

Milton replied to this in his "Eikon oklastes" In 1651 appeared the "Defensio pro Populo Anglicano" (Defence of the English people) in answer to the attacks upon the Commonwealth made by a famous Dutch Scholar, Salmasius This provoked a rejoinder in 1652 containing many scurrilous accusations against Milton himself To this Milton replied in his "Defensio Secunda" (Second Defence), in which he supports the Protectorate, and relates the particulars about his own early life and conduct. The pamphlet possesses great biographical interest These productions made him famous as a controversialist and writer of Latin prose throughout the educated circles of Europe It is often regarded as paradoxical that a staunch champion of freedom like Milton should have supported the despotic rule of Cromwell But his position can be justified when it is considered in connection with the practical conditions of his time According to Macaulay, Milton's "choice lay not between Cromwell and liberty, but between Cromwell and the Stuarts" Comparing the events of the protectorate with those of the succeeding thirty years, it can be said that Milton chose well Besides he did not identify himself with any particular system or party, in fact he "outgrew them all, and became a sect and a party by himself"

In the midst of these activities a dreadful calamity had fallen upon Milton: he became blind His eyes had always been weak, but he kept up his studies strenuously In 1650 he had lost sight of the left eye entirely, and was now warned by the doctor to desist absolutely, from reading and writing But he had just undertaken his "Defence of the English People" and this he finished at the cost of the remaining eye, and became totally blind in 1653

There are many passages in Milton's writings in which he refers to his blindness, "and these are all touching and impressive as the expressions, now of simple sorrow over his forlorn state, now of resignation to the Divine will, now again, as Mr Masson has put it, of a proud conviction that God, in blinding his bodily eyes, had meant to enlarge and clear his inner vision, and make him one of the world's truest seers and prophets"

In 1656 Milton was married to Catharine Woodcock. The union was a happy one but his wife died after fifteen months. He continued to be a pamphleteer and controversialist till 1660, the last production of his "left hand" being his "Ready and Easy way to Establish a Free Commonwealth". This appeared only two months before the proclamation of Charles II as King.

The end of the Commonwealth marked the close of Milton's activities as prose-writer and public servant. This long chapter of his life is full of biographical interest. He cannot be blamed for leaving pure literature for polemical writings because he had to answer the imperative call of duty. He had long cherished the ambition of producing some great work, yet during the time while his genius was in its very prime that task remained untouched. The only thing he wrote in the way of poetry during this time was a score or so of sonnets.

V

The return of the Stuarts was fatal to Puritanism and its ideals. The new king was a shameless libertine and his Court was the most shameless ever known in England. Infidelity and profligacy were the accepted marks of genteel society, decency and moderation were at an end. According to Mr Pattison, Restoration was a moral catastrophe. The heroic age of England passed away in a single day.

To Milton the Restoration was full of the element of personal danger because he had given the Royalists serious cause for hatred. Within a few days of the return of Charles II, Milton fled from his house and took refuge with a friend in Bartholomew Close. In June 1660 his books against the late king were burnt, and a little later he himself was arrested and placed in custody. But he was released shortly afterwards. It is said that his release was due to personal influences and his own blindness, but the fact seems to be that his escape was chiefly due to his comparative insignificance as a political force. Yet the Restoration resulted in the loss of his wealth and things were made worse by the Great Fire of 1666 which destroyed his house in Bread Street. These were now added to his

other troubles the petty domestic miseries—his bitter disappointment on account of the political failure of Puritanism—his passionate sorrow over the ruin of his hopes for his country.

In 1661 Milton settled in Artillery Walk, Burnhill Fields. In 1663 he had married his third wife, Elizabeth Minshull, a capable woman and an admirable housekeeper. The marriage was a happy one from the point of view of domestic happiness, but husband and wife had no intellectual interests in common. That Milton regarded woman as inferior to man does not prove that he despised or thought contemptuously of womanhood. On the contrary (as in "Comus") he had the highest reverence and love for women. In "Paradise Lost" the supremacy of Adam over Eve is emphasized with the nobility and moral beauty of Eve's character (vide M's testimony to womanhood in Par Lost XII, 546-559). It has been suggested that in portraying Eve Milton took his wife as a model. This may be true from the point of view of her qualities of mind and heart but not physically, because Milton never saw his wife.

Unfortunately Milton's daughters were hard and undutiful and this was the chief cause of the domestic sorrow which still made his declining years unpleasant. They had no sympathy for him in his affliction, and rebelliously grumbled when he wanted them to read and write for him. But the fault was not altogether theirs, because Milton was stern and exacting, and had neglected their education. That they should have grown restive when required to read in five or six languages, of which they knew nothing, is not at all surprising. But all allowances made their behaviour was unnatural and cruel. The domestic quarrels increased till the girls left their father's home to earn their living on their account. These painful domestic details are necessary to be borne in mind in order to understand completely the circumstances of Milton's life at the time when his greatest work was begun.

If Milton's daughters refused him help, his friends—notably Cyriack Skinner, and Thomas Ellwood—did the needful for him. We learn from his friends about his personal habits during his last years. He led a very simple and quiet life. The poetic inspiration

visited him very fitfully. Sometimes he could not make a single line during the whole night, at other times the verses came readily flowing fast and freely. "None can read "Paradise Lost" without wonder at the fulness of creative power which must have made him happy," it is remarkable that private miseries and the evils of the world were powerless to destroy his thought and imagination

As early as 1637 Milton had confided to Charles Diodati that he was preparing for the accomplishment of a great poetic task which he had set for himself. The journey to Italy was one more stage in this necessary preparation, his consciousness grew daily that he might perhaps leave something imperishable. Meanwhile he was casting about for a theme. In a manuscript note-book there is a list of ninety-nine different subjects, out of which sixty-one are scriptural, the remaining being taken from the legendary history of Britain. For a time his interest gravitated strongly toward the romantic subject of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, but before long he set aside the idea of an heroic poem and chose the *Fall of Man*. That Milton attached much importance to this subject appears from the four drafts written before 1642 (*Vide your Text book pp 150-152 for the last of them*). It appears that he conceived his subject in the form of a drama, but gave it up because it was not consistent with his original intention to write an epic poem. In "Paradise Lost" (IX, 13-47) Milton speaks of his reasons for selecting a sacred, instead of a romantic theme, and the entire passage is full of biographical interest. The full description of the romantic machinery and detail is a capital illustration of Milton's digressive habit and delight in drawing upon his stores of learning. To one of his temper, who had fought for the cause of God and righteousness and had seen that cause unsuccessful, it would have been impious to waste his remaining strength in writing petty verses about the amours and adventures of the fabled heroes of King Arthur's Court, and *human sin* was the subject upon which he fixed his mind. So he sang "Of man's first disobedience," and set to "justify the ways of God."

"The experiences of that long interval during which the poetic vein had seemed to be exhausted counted enormously in the making of *Paradise Lost*" This is a point which must be remembered. Critics regret that the Milton of "*Paradise Lost*" is not the Milton of "*Il Penseroso*," of "*Comus*," of "*Lycidas*", and that his controversial prose writings and preoccupation with public affairs injure the pure artist in him. It is true that the freshness and bloom of his earlier work are to some extent lacking in that of the later period, but meanwhile the poet has gained by his contact with life "in depth, range, moral grasp, and the peculiar power which was to enable him to soar to the heights of his "great argument." Had he never passed through the long years of struggle, "*Paradise Lost*" would not have been the poem we possess to day.

It is thought that Milton started writing "*Paradise Lost*" in 1658. But it was only when the troubles connected with the Restoration were over that he was able to take up his task in right earnest. Probably the first draft of the poem was finished about 1663, and the revised and perfected manuscript in 1665. It was passed by the official licenser of religious literature in 1666, and published in the next year. Milton received only 10£ for the book. That "*Paradise Lost*" should appear at a time when the filthy comedies of the Restoration playwrights were befouling the stage, is a fact in the external history of the poem which should be remembered.

"*Paradise Lost*" is, then, substantially the work of the early years of the Restoration, when among the English people at large there were "a weakening of the moral fibre, and a decline in the old heroic temper of faith and idealism." In reading the poem the conditions, personal and national, should be borne in mind.

The opening lines are enough to make one realise the profoundly religious spirit by which the poem is animated throughout. The practice of beginning an epic poem by invoking the Muse, which arose out of a belief in poetic inspiration, had degenerated into mere pedantic formality. In Milton's hands it once more assumes its original life and meaning. He does not appeal for help to any stereotyped goddess, but turns instead to the Heavenly Muse for

instruction and support His sublime exordium is an invocation both religious and poetic

The opening lines contain the invocation, and also, in epic fashion, announce the theme The subject is so treated as to become universalised ; the Tragedy of Eden is conceived as the tragedy of the whole human race ; the poem describes the perpetual conflict between God and Satan alike throughout history and in the soul of each individual man. He wrote of the early stages in the eternal conflict with the recent events in England in mind In describing the debate in the infernal council in Book II of *Paradise Lost* it is evident that while writing of the overthrow of the Puritan cause in mind, Milton also portrays the forces of evil which spread Satan's kingdom—brutality, unmoralised culture, Godless wealth, and Godless state craft and ambition, which are represented by Moloch, Belial, Mammon, and Beelzebub respectively. In order to make the contrast pointed, Milton introduces the Seraph Abdiel, which represents the unbending Puritan of Milton's time, and the faithful and righteous man of all times and places

Not only in the theme, but also by the use of "historical anticipation," does Milton's poem reach out beyond the limits of its nominal subject. He incorporates matter which lies far outside the story of Eden and the Fall ; *e.g.* Adam foresees the corruption of the world due to his sin till the time of the Great Flood, and Michael gives the history of the mankind till the coming of the Saviour and the work of Redemption Though the text is the loss of Paradise, the closing emphasis is on the triumph of good The poet links his universal theme with the question of individual conduct and destiny, and teaches the great lesson "that happiness on earth consists in willing dependence on God's power, trust in His goodness, obedience to His will."

Along with the subject-matter and spirit of the poem, *Paradise Lost* has to be studied as a work of art It belongs in plan and structure to the "epic" kind of poetry. Milton was indebted to the great epics of classical antiquity for various details—"incidents, metaphors, similes, turns of speech"—to the Bible and the Greek

dramatists, Ariosto, Tasso, and Spenser Though he borrowed freely, he made what he borrowed his own.

Milton was throughout a child at once of the Reformation and the Renaissance, but in his case the Puritan did not destroy the humanist He added the Hellenic love of knowledge and beauty to the Hebraic zeal for righteousness, and it is incorrect to say that he was "the greatest exponent of Puritanism in English literature."

"Paradise Lost" is neither easy nor uniformly interesting reading. The style is often extremely involved, the poem is full of ellipses, inversions, and Latinisms, and there are many tedious theological and philosophical discussions But all deductions made, "Paradise Lost" is alike in design and execution "incomparably the greatest poem" in the English language

It is most probable that Milton had intended to leave "Paradise Lost" where it stood, but a suggestion from his friend, Ellwood, led him to write "Paradise Regained. Milton requested Ellwood to pronounce judgment upon "Paradise Lost," and when the latter returned the book he pleasantly said to the poet, "Thou hast said much here of Paradise Lost; but what hast thou to say of Paradise found?" Milton thought over the matter and the result was "Paradise Regained".

"Paradise Regained" has little of "the tremendous creative energy, the marvellous imagination, the sustained intellectual force, the sweep and harmony of style" which belongs to "Paradise Lost". Nevertheless "it has dignity and nobility, some great moments, and here and there passages of rare homely tenderness and charm" It is often asked why Milton calls his poem "Paradise Regained" when the substance of it is provided only by the temptation of Christ in the wilderness; and "the answer seems to be that in the poet's mind temptation was balanced against temptation; and as in the one case Paradise had been lost by the weakness and disobedience of man, so in the other case, through the strength and righteousness of the "greater man," Satan was effectively defeated, and our fallen race restored to "the blissful seat" The poem is not incomplete because, as Masson says, "the virtual deliverance of the

world from the power of Satan and his crew may be represented as achieved in Christ's life on earth, and Milton represents it as achieved in Christ's first encounter with Satan at the outset of His ministry."

The Fourth Book of the poem is most interesting from the autobiographical point of view. We have, on the one hand, the atmosphere of the Renaissance with its love of Greek philosophy, poetry, and art, and on the other, "the stern and uncompromising answer of the Puritan to all the seductions of pagan beauty and love," which shows the supremacy of the Puritan in Milton at the time.

"Samson Agonistes" ("Samson the Wrestler") appeared in 1671 along with "Paradise Regained." It is a drama modelled upon the lines of Greek tragedy, in which "classic forms are used for Christian subject-matter: the Hedonist and the Puritan in Milton are again found united." In Samson Milton saw the image "of the England lured away by the seductions of the Dalila of the Restoration, of the Puritan cause overwhelmed by the Philistines, of himself, blind, disappointed, surrounded by foes to his principles and faith." But the drama became not only the vehicle of his bitter grief, but also the medium by which he expressed his firm faith in the ultimate triumph of righteousness, and the conquering power of patience.

Milton did not write any more verse after that. He passed away very peacefully on November 8, 1674, and was buried in St Giles's Church, Cripplegate.

VI

In Milton the man is inseparable from the poet. We must admire his character as well as his genius. His faults are apparent. He was "austere, uncompromising, exacting, often stern, sometimes stiff-necked, he had too little tolerance for the weaknesses of average humanity;" too little of mercy and too little of the charity which distinguishes between the sin and the sinner. His intellectual vision was large, his scholarship generous, but his moral outlook was narrow, his temper hard and inflexible, yet his supreme

greatness as a man cannot be questioned " From first to last he lived his life at high moral tension, and his tremendous earnestness, his passionate zeal for righteousness, his ardent patriotism, his never-failing devotion to duty, combine to make him worthy of our deepest admiration. We feel the spirit of his high idealism in the activities of his public career as well as in his efforts and achievements as a poet. He fully realised the greatness of his genius, and often spoke of it with a frankness amounting to intellectual pride, but this was because he regarded it as a gift from God. " From the beginning.the poetic life meant for him a life of dedication to the purest and noblest of purposes " Next to Shakespeare's his is the greatest name in the history of English poetry

NOTES

L'ALLEGRO THE MAN OF MIRTH

Lines 1-10. In these lines Milton drives away Melancholy. She is described as the offspring of Cerberus and the blackest Midnight, who bore her in the desolate cave of the river Styx amongst dreadful shapes and sounds and infernal sights. She is to find out some savage cave where 'unmitigated darkness' prevails, and the raven makes the place more hideous. There—in perpetual darkness and under dangerous rocks—should Melancholy dwell.

1. Hence—get away, go from here, go hence. Loathed—hateful, loathsome. Melancholy—(lit. black bile) is one of the four humours, and denotes a dark, bilious, and surly temperament. Melancholy is here represented as an evil goddess.

2. Of Cerberus...born—The offspring of a hell-hound and dark Midnight. Milton invents his own mythology in describing the lineage of Melancholy. Darkness and repulsiveness being the main features of Melancholy, the parents chosen are Cerberus and the dark Midnight. Milton's genealogies are framed to suit his purposes, and the fact that (a) Cerberus in classical mythology has no descendants, or (b) Night is described as the wife of Darkness and mother of the Night and Day, need not be seriously considered. Cerberus was a three-headed dog that guarded the gates of Hell. He had snakes for hair. He was not cruel to those that would enter, but allowed none to come out. Those who visited the Kingdom of Pluto, the king of the dead, in their life time used to appease his barking mouths with cakes.

3 Stygian—adjective from 'Styx,' the river of Hell The word literally means 'hate' Forlorn—lit utterly lost, abandoned, lonely, gloomy.

4. 'Mongst—amongst Horrid—horrible, dreadful Shapes—images, forms, figures Unholy—infernal, hellish

5 Uncouth—lit unknown, uncivilised, strange

6 Where .. wings—the place is so dark that light never comes there The figure is taken from a bird that completely covers its eggs while hatching them in order to protect them from intrusion Brooding—'covering all things' Jealous—intolerant of light Darkness is here personified

7. Night-raven—It is a black bird of ill-omen The poet associates it with the night on account of its black colour. Sings—makes its sound, crows ominously Its noise makes the place more fearful.

8 Ebon—black as ebony, a hard wood of dark colour. Low-browed—overhanging, like the frowning brows of the melancholy man, threatening, pendant

9. Ragged—rough-looking, rugged

10 Cimmerian—"In the *Odyssey* the Cimmerians are a people dwelling beyond the ocean stream in a land of perpetual darkness; afterwards the name was given to a people in the region of the Black Sea (whence Crimea)" The word 'Cimmerian' is to be taken with the word 'dark', i e, in a desert dark as that in which the Cimmerians live."

Lines 11-24 In these lines Milton invites Mirth and describes her parentage. She is represented as the daughter of Bacchus and Venus; or as the offspring of Zephyr and Aurora Hence she is so nimble, cheerful, and blatid

11. Fair and free—beautiful in form and graceful in movement.

12 Ycleped—(obs) called. Euphrosyne—lit. Mirth or cheerfulness "Euphrosyne is in Greek Mythology one of the three graces who are the embodiments of all that is graceful and gracious in life" She and her two sisters were the daughters of Zeus Zeus

being associated with the idea of the sky, this means that Mirth is the child of the bright heavens and the sea

13. Heart-easing—comfort-giving.

14. Venus—goddess of love At a birth—at one birth.

15. Two.Graces—Aglaia and Thalia A commentator gives their names as Meat and Drink.

16. Ivy-crowned Bacchus—Bacchus was the god of the vine. He is variously represented crowned with wine and ivy leaves. His figure is that of an effeminate young man. The Mirth of Society was attributed to Bacchus, and the ivy plant was the symbol of faithful companionship

17. Or whether—the construction is irregular here We should say "whom either Venus here or, as some sages sing, the frolic wind" 'either' in line 14 has been omitted Clearly Milton suggests that there is a choice

18 Frolic—playful, frolicsome. Breathes the spring—i e, its breath causes buds to blossom up into spring flowers

19 Zephyr—the gentle wind of the west Aurora—the goddess of dawn Playing—dallying.

20 A-maying—celebrating the May-day. On the first of May people in European countries gather flowers, set up a May-pole, and sing and dance round it

21. Beds of violets—notice the pun. It means (1) a flower (violet) bed (2) bed for lying down

22 Fresh blown—just blossomed Washed in dew—dew-be-sprinkled ; hence beautiful.

23 Filled her—made her pregnant

24. Buxom—full of bending, pliant, springing or bouncing, lively brisk, healthy The word 'buxom' suggests all these ideas Blithe—cheerful, happy, gay Debonair—this word is a combination of three French words (*de*, of ; *bon*, good ; *air*, style or manners) written as one, and means bland, graceful, or having attractive manners.

Note.—By giving two different stories about Mirth's parentage Milton means to say that mirth is not purely boisterous and social but is in part born from natural beauties.

Lines 25-36—In these lines the companions of Mirth are described. The companions are, Jest, Youthful Jollity, Quips, Cranks, Wanton Wiles, Nods, Becks, Wreathed Smiles, Sport, Laughter, and Liberty.

25 Haste thee—look sharp Nymph—goddess.

26 Youthful jollity—playfulness characteristic of young man. 'Jollity' means loud merriment

27. Quips—clever jests, smart retorts Cranks—turns of humour. 'Crank' means a 'twist,' or a 'bend' and signifies wrenching thoughts from their logical sequence Wanton—lit. unrestrained, playful Wiles—harmless tricks

28 Becks—significant gestures or signs. Wreathed smiles—smiles forming wrinkles in the cheek, half-suppressed arch smiles

29. Hang on—are visible on Hebe, the goddess of youth, was the daughter of Jupiter and Juno She was the cupbearer of the gods.

30 Dimple—a depression or dipple (a little dip) formed in the cheek by smiling Sleek—beautiful, delicate Such as hang . . . sleek—"such wreathed smiles as hang on the cheek of Hebe and are wont to appear on dimpled cheeks"

31 Wrinkled care—care having furrows on the forehead, which are the signs of anxiety. 'Care' is personified here, and means a 'care-worn man'

32 Laughter side—'Laughter' is personified here An excessive laughter makes us feel a pressure on the sides of the body, and hence it is necessary to hold them lest they should burst Cf. "laugh till you split"

33, 34 Come . . . toe—"come and dance some dainty dance". Trip it—means 'trip the tripping,' that is move in a dancing motion. Light—nimble, quick of movement Fantastic—here means something which appeals to the imagination, something fanciful, dainty and fairytale

35 Right hand—is the position of honour (*dast-i-rast*). That is to say Liberty is the chief companion of Mirth. Lead with thee—bring with thee.

36 The.....Liberty—Liberty is indispensable to Mirth The association of Liberty to mountains is probably due to the fact that countries like Greece and Switzerland were the homes of liberty.

Of. "Two voices are there—one is of the sea,
One of the mountains, each a mighty voice,
In both from age to age Thou did'st rejoice,
They were thy chosen Music, Liberty."

—Wordsworth.

and Tennyson :

"Of old sat Freedom on the heights"

Lines 37-116. In these lines the poet describes the enjoyments which one can expect from the country after becoming a votary of the goddess of Mirth, viz, hearing the songs of the lark, enjoying the morning sights and sounds—e g., the crowing of the cock and his strutting proudly before his dames, sounds of the hounds and horn, the landscape scenery, etc., etc —, dining with poor cottagers, dancing with country maids, drinking with the country-folk, and hearing the stories of ghosts and fairies

37. If I. due—If I pay you as much respect as you deserve.

38 Admit me of—admit me to, accept me as one, make me one of. Crew—company That is accept me as a follower

39 Her—i e Liberty.

40. Unreproved—innocent, irreproachable Note Milton wants to enjoy pleasures with liberty, but his conception of Liberty is not consistent with immorality *Free* qualifies the word 'pleasures' It may mean either unrestrained or free from any taint of immorality.

41 Flight—the lark flies to the highest pitch in the sky.

42 Startle—arouse or alarm Dull—drowsy Night is startled by the singing of the lark because it indicates the approach of day, night's enemy Night is personified here

43. Watch tower - the height where the lark flies. *Oj.*

"that from heaven or near it

Pourest thy full heart"

- Shetley's Skylark.

44 Dappled-Spotted, variegated, 'grey flecked with red.'
Notice the alliteration in this line.

45 This line has given some trouble to commentators. Hales thinks that the verb "to come" depends upon the verb "to hear" in line 41. He wishes to hear the lark begin its flight, and then to hear it come to his window and give him good-morning. Bell objects to this interpretation on the following grounds - "(1) that in making the lark alight at the window of a human dwelling Milton seems to be forgetful of a lark's habits; (2) that the verb 'hear' is usually followed by an infinitive without 'to' . . ." "These difficulties," he says, "are removed by saying that Milton was not accurate in his knowledge of nature, and the distance from 'hear' makes it necessary to insert 'to'." Prof. Masson says that 'to come' depends on 'admit' This means that L' Allegro after hearing the song of the lark comes to bid good-morning to the inmates of the house. Brett takes 'to come' "purely on its own merits, without reference to an apparent sequence," and explains it as meaning "till the dawn rises, destined after its rising to come and wake me" The first interpretation appears to be acceptable. In spite of sorrow-despite the heaviness of mind to which every one is liable

47, 48 Milton is inaccurate here - The sweet-briar and the eglantine are one and the same thing, and he takes them as two different plants. But some critics defend Milton against the charge of inaccuracy by taking "twisted eglantine" as equivalent to the honey-suckle

49 Lively-cheerful, joyous Din-sound, crowing.

50 Rear-"the last shadows of Night which retreats before the conquering day" Most of the darkness vanishes at the approach of dawn, the rest is dispersed by the crowing of the cock.

52. Stoutly struts—walks right pompously, giving itself many airs of importance as if it put the Darkness to flight, or as if it were the lord of all 'the dames'

53. Listening—connect it with line 46, i. e. who lie and listen. Notice the alliteration in this line

54. Cheerly—cheerily, joyously 'Cheerly' is Elizabethan. Cheerlymorn—"They break the silence of the morning"

55. Hoar -hoary, "grey with age," old.

56. Throughshrill—the sound of the hounds and horn becomes shrill while it passes through wooded valleys

57. Walking unseen—walking conspicuously The man of mirth wishes to be seen by others Compare this line with l. 65 of *Il Penseroso* where the pensive man is described as walking 'unseen' Critics infer from this that *Il Penseroso* was written first and *L'Allegro* afterwards.

59. Rightgate—directly against the eastern sky, in order to watch the sunrise. The word gate suggests the idea of a mansion that is the eastern gate of the mansion of the sun

60. When... ..state—when the sun begins his career in the sky The line means more than that The word 'great' suggests the idea of a great king who is above 'things temporal,' or it may by a far-fetched interpretation refer to the brightness of the sun 'Begins his state' is in keeping with the idea of a great king, and means 'begins his royal progress' through the sky, his kingdom A king is said to go 'in state' when he goes with great pomp and show being attended by his retinue (train of followers)

61. Amber—'golden yellow,' brown

62. The clouds . . .dight—"the clouds being arrayed in the colours of the sun. 'Livery' mean the dress or uniform delivered to servants by their masters It is of a distinctive colour or pattern Hence the colours given by the sun to the clouds are fittingly called its liveries The idea of the sun being a great king is sustained in this line Dight—dighted, dressed, arrayed.

63. Near at hand—hard by, quite close to.

64. Whistles—owing to the cheerful weather Furrowed—tilled having the channels made by the plough.

65 Blithe—sings while she is in a cheerful mood -

66 Whets—sets it on edge, sharpens

67. Every . . . tale—the word 'tale' has a double meaning It means a story, that is every shepherd narrates a story in turn Secondly it means number It would then mean, every shepherd counts up the number of his sheep as they pass one by one The latter interpretation is accurate.

68 Dale—a valley.

69 Sraight—straightway, directly, 'instantaneously. Hath caught—has seen

70 Whilst . . measures—while it surveys the surrounding scenery Landskip—landscape

71. Russet—reddish brown Probably it means "strewn with autumn leaves." Lawns—denote grassy uplands which are even in surface Fallows—Farmers generally allow the land a rest after it has borne crops twice or thrice, and it is then said to lie fallow. Hence the word denotes plough lands which are not under cultivation Such lands look grey in the sun when there is a hoar frost

72 Nibbling—eating grass by taking small bites Stray—roam about, wander.

73 Barren breast—breast uncovered by trees, rocky surface—Notice the alliteration in this line

74 Labouring—(1) charged with vapour, (2) travelling wearily. Hence they rest on the mountain.

75 Trim.—Neat, good-looking, well-kept Daisies—(day's eye) Surajmukhi Pied—variegated The word may refer either to the daisies as having petals of different colours, or to the meadows which look variegated with the daisies

76. Shallow . . wide—commenting on this line Hales says that there are several rivulets at or near Horton, and Milton may refer to the Thames and the Coln which pours itself into the Thames.

Milton may have in his mind the Thames and its tributaries But the plural number makes the account idealistic

77 Towerssees—These lines have a distinctly romantic touch. Critics see here a reference to the Windsor Castle and the Windsor Park.

78. Bosomed ... trees—If the reference is to the Windsor Castle the meaning is that the lofty trees surround the towers and battlements up to their bosom, their tops rising above the trees If the reference is to some old baronial castle, then the meaning is that the lofty trees conceal the towers and battlements from view

79 Beauty—beautiful girl Mark the anti-puritanic attitude of Milton in this line

80 Cynosure .. .eyes—An object of gaze and admiration for the young men belonging to the neighbourhood Cynosure—(from Gr. kynos and oura) the 'dog's tail,' which is situated in the tail of the 'Little Bear', Polar Star It was the guiding star of the ancient sailors who fixed their eyes on it It then came to be used metaphorically, for an 'object of gaze'

81. Hard by—quite close to, very near.

83 Corydon and Thyrsis—typical names of rustics taken from the pastoral poems of classical poets like Theocrites and Virgil.

84 Savoury—delicious, full of relish Set—seated

85 Of herbsmesses—their dinner consists of cooked vegetables and other simple dishes which country people like very much.

86 Neat-handed—the word conveys the ideas of skilfulness cleanliness and decency That is Phillis cooks delicious dishes which are very clean-looking Phillis—(vide note on l 83). Dresses—cooks

87 Bower—a lady's chamber

88 Thestylis—(vide note on l 83).

89 Or, if—"having dressed the meal, she hurries out either to bind the sheaves, if it is the time of corn-harvest, or if it is the hay-harvest, to gather it into piles in the meadow"

90 Tanned—sun-dried Haycock—pile of hay, hayloft. Mead—meadow.

91. Secure—free from care, sure Cf.

“As some fair female unadorned and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign.”

—Goldsmith . *Deserted Village*.

92 Upland—situated on the upper slopes of the hills The idea is that of remoteness from civilization ; hence ‘rude’ Hamlets—small villages Cf.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree’s shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould’ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

From Gray’s Elegy.

The upland .. invite—The man of mirth is sure to find much food for entertainment in the rustic villages where people enjoy happiness of a blameless character

93 Merry bells—(Transferred Epithet) It is not the bells that are merry, but the people whom they make merry. The church bells were rung on festive occasions to call the people together.

94 Jocund—joyous, merry. Rebeck—(Arabic Rabab)—an instrument of music played with a bow It was, originally a two-stringed, then a three-stringed instrument

95 To—in accompaniment with

96 Chequered shade—variegated, “having alternate patches of darkness and brightness” When the sun’s rays pass through the gaps between the leaves of a tree, they produce “alternate patches of darkness and brightness”

Cf. Shakespeare

“The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind,
And make a chequer’d shadow on the ground”

97. Come... play—“having come out to play” (infinitive of purpose)

98 Sunshine—(Noun used as adj.) brightened by the sun; the beauty of which is enhanced by the bright rays of the sun. Holy-day—a festive-day or the time of enjoyment in the evening after the day’s work is over.

99 Live-long—exceedingly long, 'long as life' The word implies that it is the summer time when the days are proverbially long. Fall—vanish, come to a close Till fail—they continue their enjoyments till it is absolutely dark.

100. Then to—then they repair or proceed to. Nut-brown ale—ale that looks brown like nuts (probably because of the spices).

101. With stories—that is to say they quaff ale and tell stories of fairies, goblins etc Feat—an unusual performance, or wonderfully heroic deed.

102 Fairy Mab—(Mab, etymologically means a child) In fairy folklore Mab is fairies' midwife, that is she delivers the fancies of men. Shakespeare represents her as one teasing people for dirtiness and as a mischief-maker, also as the hag nightmare

"When about the cream bowls sweet,
You and all your elves do meet,
This is Mab, the mistress-fairy,
That doth nightly rob the dairy,
She that pinches country-wenches
If they scrub not clean their benches"

Ben Jonson, quoted by Bell.

Junkets—juncates, dainties, delicacies.

103 She . . . said—another woman tells the story of how she was pinched and pulled by fairy Mab (see the last two lines of the quotation from Ben Jonson).

104. And he..... led—a man relates his experience of the friar's lantern. Friar's lantern—Jack o' Lantern or Will o' the Wisp, "the light moving on marshy places which the lost traveller mistakes for a light in a window and vainly pursues" It was another popular superstition

105. Tellsswet—this is another story told by the same man Goblin—Robin Goodfellow, Shakespeare's Puck. He was famous for mischievous pranks and practical jokes, but he sometimes performed domestic services by small presents Drudging—working very hard. Swet—worked hard, sweated.

106. To . . . set—the bowl of cream is the reward of Robin Goodfellow's work He would not take it unless he had done the work entrusted to him. Set—placed

107, 108 Ere men—before the day had dawned or before the first signs of the light of the morning Shadowy—immaterial, spiritual Flail—a threshing instrument Threshed—taken the corn from the straw

110 Lies him down—lays himself down lubbar (the word is connected with the Welsh word lob—a fool) ugly, clumsy. Fiend is pronounced 'fend'

111. And .. length—measures his length on the chimney, covers the whole length of the chimney while lying down. Chimney in French means the fire-place

112 Basks—warms Hairy strength—i.e., his strong body covered with hair. Copiousness of hair is a sign of strength

113 Cropful—crop means the maw or stomach of a fowl The word here means 'with his stomach quite full up', and suggests the idea of contempt. Flings—goes away hastily.

114 Matin rings—sings his morning song, crows in the morning. Matin (Matula—Goddess of morning) morning prayers—properly morning

115 Thus . . . tales—the tales being finished in this way. Creep—take to, retire

116 Whispering—gently blowing Lulled asleep—quietly made to sleep

Lines 117-134 In these lines the poet describes the pleasures of town life—(pageants contests of wit or arms), masks, feasts, and comic and romantic representations.

117 Towered . . . then—L'Allegro now goes to the town to enjoy the festivities of the town-people Us—men of mirth.

118. Busy . . . men—the concourse of people Hum—confused sounds. The word is particularly used in the case of the noise produced by the bees, and suggests the idea of a large crowd of people.

119. Throngs—crowds

120 In weeds of peace—clothed in the garments that are worn in peaceful times. The word 'weeds' now is used exclusively in the sense of mourning clothes, as 'widow's weeds'. Triumphs—pageants, processions or shows. In the time of Queen Elizabeth, pageants were held in the houses of the rich, where the guests were entertained with masks and similar entertainments.

121-122 Store of ladies—a bevy of ladies, a large number of ladies. "The nobles arrange pageants that they may compete in contests of body or mind, inspired by the bright looks of admiring ladies, the fairest and noblest of whom awards the prize to the winner." Influence—the word is of astrological origin, and means something poured, flowing. It was believed that every man was born under a star and that its 'influence' affected him well or ill according as it (influence) was good or bad. The ladies are compared here to stars as they sit up above the lists, and inspire strength in the minds of their favourites by means of their encouraging looks (influence). Judge—the subject is 'who'.

123 Of arms—the competitions of the 'Courts of love' or ordinary tournaments or sitting. Contend compete.

124 Grace—favour, (properly thanks). Whom all commend—of her who is the reigning or sovereign beauty.

125 Hymen—the god of marriage. The line means 'let there often be marriages and marriage feasts'.

126 Saffron—bright yellow (Za'fran). The bride wore a yellow veil, which was considered a lucky colour. Taper clear—brightly burning torch. "The torch is symbolic of family life, which both in Greece and Rome was typified in the ever-burning hearth. When the bride left her mother's house she took with her the ancestral fire of her house, being proceeded by a torch lighted at her parent's home." Taper now means a small wax candle.

127. Pomp—splendid show. Revelry—entertainments consisting of eating, dancing, etc.

128. Mask—a kind of dramatic performance not so serious as a drama, in which the players used to put on masks. Masks were

written on allegorical subjects conveying moral lessons. Antique—ancient, old fashioned.

129 Youthful poets—poets having a juvenile imagination
(dream—imagine

130 Eves—evenings Haunted streams—Frequented by water nymphs

131-131 Then . wild—"L'Allegro repairs to the theatre if a company is acting either a comedy by the learned Jonson or a romantic play by Shakespeare, the very soul of imagination, whose songs are free and artless as those of a bird in the woods". Well-trod—where good plays are acted by good actors Anon—immediately, presently Jonson—Ben Jonson was the greatest comedian of Elizabeth's Time He was a deeply learned man, but was open to the charge of pedantry Learned sock—Jonson's comedies which were characterised by learning, classical and antiquarian Sock means the low slippers used by actors in comedy in Rome. The word suggests both "comedy and a classical style" Jonson uses his learning in weaving a story, but Shakespeare simply depends upon his rich imagination

Native . wild—Free, artless, and natural or spontaneous notes like those of a bird

Lines 135-150 In these lines Milton describes the tender and voluptuous music he likes to hear, such music as would force even the hard-hearted Pluto to set at liberty Orpheus' wife, Eurydice

135 Against eating cares as a protection against the worries which gnaw at the heart

136-144 Lap me harmony—"Wrap me in the atmosphere of tender music set to such poetry as never dies, (let the strains be) such as may penetrate to the soul that goes out to them, let the turns of the music, now rising, now falling, with full evidences and unbroken (linked) melodies, free with the naturalness of perfect art (141) and intertwined (mazes) with the harmonious (melting) accents of the singer, unbind for me that harmony which the cares of life keep a prisoner in my soul" Lap—wrap Lydian airs—

Lidian Music was tender, soothing and voluptuous. The other two kinds of music among the Greeks were (1) the Phrygian, which was associated with 'unrestrained revelry,' and (2) the Dorian, which was stately and inspired courage and endurance. Married ... verse set to standard or imperishable poetry. Such ... pierce—such as may touch responsive chords (the idea is more than that. Vide the paraphrase) Winding bout—turns of the music, intertwining notes. Linked sweetness—one sweet note uniting with another. Long drawn out—protracted (Note the music goes on slowly), with full cadences. Wanton heed—(an oxymoron) playful attention. Giddy cunning—(another oxymoron) restless skill. The musician is in reality very clever, but he pretends to be giddy. Mazes. The Musician lets his voice go through all the intricacies, but he never allows it to lose harmony. Untwisting. harmony—making active the capacity for the appreciation of music, which (capacity) lies dormant.

115 Orpheus' self—Orpheus himself. Orpheus was a musician according to Greek mythology. His music tamed fierce animals, and even trees and stones followed his lyre. That—so that. Heave his head—raise his head in order to hear the music.

116 Golden slumber—sweet and sound sleep that he is enjoying in the Elysium.

118, 119 Won the ear of Pluto completely charmed Pluto, the king of the dead. The music would have softened the heart of Pluto, to such an extent that he would have set free Orpheus' wife unconditionally. Orpheus went to the nether world to persuade Pluto to let his wife, Eurydice, return to the upper world. Pluto agreed on condition that Orpheus would not look back to see whether she was following. He broke this condition half way up, and his wife disappeared.

120 Half-regained—the above note makes this perfectly clear.

151, 152 These lines—Milton is not quite sure whether mirth can give all the pleasures described above. Compare the closing lines of *Il Penseroso* with these lines.

IL PENSEROSO

THE PENSIVE MAN

Lines 1-10. In these lines Milton drives away the 'vain deluding joys', which, according to him are the offspring of pure folly, of no use to wise men but attractive to foolish people. They are attractive outwardly, but inwardly they are unreal and unsubstantial, and may befittingly called the attendants of Morpheus, god of sleep

1 Vain—(used in its literal sense) empty useless Deluding—misleading, deceitful

2 The bred—the children of folly, pure and simple Milton condemns frivolous and fickle joys, which result in nothing good, but on the contrary lead men into trouble

3 How . bestead—how little help you give, you stand in no good stead Stead means place, and *bestead* therefore means to be in a place Then it comes to mean to help or support in which sense it is used here

4 Fixed mind—steady or constant people, or people who have lofty aims Fill—satisfy, please, possess Toys—vanities, worthless attractions

3, 4 How toys'—you are of no help or use whatever to steady people, or people possessing lofty aims and cannot win their hearts with your 'vain' attractions

5 Idle brain—as opposed to fixed mind Of 'An idle brain is the Devil's workshop

6 Fancies fond—'fond' is used in its literal sense of 'foolish' (from fone—to dote upon) Foolish people, who take a fancy to things looking bright outwardly but having no intrinsic value Gaudy—showy, gorgeous Shapes—images forms Possess—occupy, fill

7. Thick—close together

8 Gay—bright People—inhabit, live in, crowd

6-8 And fancies sun-beams—"fill foolish imaginations with glittering images as close together and as countless as the notes that dance so busily in the sun's rays"

9. Or likest—Now we should say 'most like'; 'or better still like' Hovering dreams—rapidly-changing dreams, thick-coming dreams that are of a short duration and leave no permanent impression on the mind

10 Fickle—changeable, "not coming regularly", inconstant Pensioners—retainers, attendants Of Constituting Morpheus --According to greek mythology Morpheus is the god of dreams and the brother of Sleep and Death; here simply the god of Sleep Train—retinue

[The student will notice that the Mirth described by the poet in the last poem differs from the Mirth condemned here]

Lines 11-44. In these lines Milton describes Melancholy's parentage and her look She is represented as the daughter of Saturn and Vesta Her face dazzles human eyes, and therefore she covers it with a black veil, so that she veritably looks like Prince Memnon's sister or Queen Cassiopeia She is like a nun, pensive, devout, pure, sober, steadfast, and demure, and is dressed in black, her robe flowing with a "Majestic train" She walks with even steps and in a pensive gait, her eyes hold communion with the skies as she is thoroughly absorbed in meditation Due to religious ecstasy she loses consciousness of everything around her, and looks like a statue with her eyes fixed on the earth

11 Hail—"health to you"; welcome

12 Melancholy—(here) seriousness, pensiveness. Note that this melancholy is different from that which has been described in L'Allegro

13 Visage—face

14 Fit—exactly suit, to be borne by

13, 14 Whose . . sight—whose bright angelic appearance dazzles human eyes and they cannot properly see it

15 Weaker --too weak to see (a Latinism).

16 Overlaid—covered Staid—sober Wisdom's hue—black colour is associated with wisdom Clergymen and professors wear black gowns when performing their duties

17, 18 Black ...beseem—black indeed, but it is such blackness as in the opinion of people would befit Prince Memnon's sister. Prince Memnon—a handsome Ethiopian prince, son of Tithonus and Dawn He fought in the Trojan war and was killed by Achilles Memnon had no sister, but this need not trouble us Clearly Milton means us to take the phrase in the sense of a black beautiful Egyptian princess

19-21. Or that offended—'Starred Ethiop Queen' refers to Cassiopeia, wife of Cepheus, an Ethiopian king She boasted that she was more beautiful than the Nereids, daughters of Nereus, a sea-god, and challenged them to a trial of beauty. In order to punish her for her improper conduct Poseidon, the king of the sea, sent a sea-monster into her land, which could only be appeased by the sacrifice of her daughter, Andromeda. She was, however, rescued with her family by Perseus, and put in the skies and transformed into the constellation called Cassiopeia This explains the epithet 'starred'

Above the sea-nymphs—i.e. above the beauty of the Nereids Powers—exalted dignity, divinity

22 Yet. descended—their parents were human beings, but your lineage is divine

23, 24 Thee. here—you were born of Vesta (mother) and Saturn (father) many years ago Vesta—a goddess daughter of Rhea and Saturn She was the type of "chastity and the calm beauty of home life," and the patron-goddess of vestal virgins Long of yore—in years long ago Saturn—the son of Uranus (sky) and Gaia (earth) He was the king of gods before Zeus He is called 'solitary' because he ate up all his children, and because he was of a gloomy disposition (N.B.—The genealogy of Melancholy, as given here, is clearly of Milton's own invention)

25 His daughter she—i.e. Vesta was the daughter of Saturn In reign—when Saturn was the king of gods

26 Such . stain—it was not regarded as a crime or disgrace to marry one's daughter Mixture—marriage, mixture of blood by means of marriage

27. Glades—open places in a forest

28. Secret shades—hidden shady places

29. Woody—full of woods Ida—a mountain in Crete where Jove was brought up Inmost-grove—secluded recesses

30. Fear of Jove—the reference is to the war between Jupiter and Saturn Saturn was dethroned Yet—as yet.

31. Pensive—thoughtful Devout—given to meditation and contemplation

32 Stedfast—constant, unchangeable Demure—lit of good manners, modest

33 All—completely Robe grain—a dress having a "violet shade of purple;" a dress of the darkest colour Grain-dye 'Dyed in grain' now means 'dyed in fast purple colour.' Sable—an animal of the weasel kind with black fur, hence came to mean 'black' Stole—a long robe. Cyprus lawn—a fine kind of black linen

34, 35 Train—is the hanging part of the gown of a queen which is borne by pages

36 Decent—comely, beautiful The word may refer either to the shoulders or to the manner in which the cyprus is drawn over the shoulders

37. Wonted state—usual dignity or majestic manner

38 Even—equal The word suggests the idea of calmness. Musing gait—walking slowly When a man is in a pensive mood he naturally walks slowly

39 Commerce with the skies—holding communion with the skies, dealing with the skies The pensive man receives inspiration from the heavenly spirits in return for his meditation.

40. Thy... eyes—your absorbed soul being concentrated in your eyes. That is to say, the pensive man is so deeply absorbed in contemplation that he is entirely forgetful of his body—in fact his

entire soul is focussed in his eyes that are holding communion with the skies

41 Held still—(held still in holy passion) Motionless while in a deeply contemplative mood—a state almost of trance

42 Forget marble—Lose consciousness of every thing around you so completely that you should become as calm and motionless as marble

43 Leaden—(1) excessively thoughtful, (2) heavy, (3) gloomy or, saturnine, lead being called saturn in the alchemists' language. "Leaden-coloured eye-sockets betoken melancholy, or excess of thoughtfulness" (Masson) Sad—serious

44 As fast—as firmly as you fixed them on the skies "She exchanges her upward gaze for downward look, with that she recalls herself from her trance to the concerns of life on earth.

"Type of the wise who soar, but never roam,
True to the kindred points of Heaven and home"

Lines 45-55 In these lines the poet describes the companions of Melancholy—Peace, Quiet, Spare Fast, Leisure, Contemplation, and Silence.

46 Spare—"Scanty", thin Fast—"frugality", one who observes fasts. Spare diet—If we take "fast in the sense of frugal, then it means that one who is given to scanty frugality", 'shares the life of the gods' Otherwise this explanation will clear the meaning "When we endure fasts in the flesh we enjoy feasts, in the spirit The Muses are supposed to dance in circle round the throne of Jupiter (ll 47, 48) and Spare Fast enjoys this happy sight" "These feasts in spirit mean the power both to appreciate and compose poetry"

47 Ring—circle.

48 Altar—This word suggests the idea of serious poetry

50 Trim—well-kept, beautiful Takes pleasure enjoys himself It is a pleasure to spend one's leisure-time in a garden.

51 Chiefest—(a double superlative) most important

52 Soars—rises towards heaven Golden wing—contemplation is here called a cherub (l 54) and a cherub had golden wings

53, 51. Guiding . contemplation—The reference is to chapter X of the book of Ezekiel in the Bible “When I looked, behold, the four wheels by the cherubim, one wheel by one cherub, another by another cherub etc, etc” In the vision of Ezekiel the throne of God has four wheels guided by cherubim, and a fire burning between the wheels Milton means to say that contemplation is the medium by which we can approach God

55 Mute—dumb, silent Hist along—softly bring with you

Lines 56-120—In these lines Milton describes how *Il Penseroso* spends his night The melancholy man begins his meditations at nightfall He hears the sad songs of the nightingale and failing that, watches, while walking “unseen,” the solitary moon in the sky, and often hears the sound of the ‘curfew’ bell And if the air does not permit his staying outside, he retires to some solitary place and spends the whole night in reading the philosophical works of Hermes and Plato and the Greek tragedies and those of Shakespeare He enjoys also the romances of Tasso, Ariosto, Spenser, and Dante, and wishes the completion of incomplete stories that make him sad—e.g. Chaucer’s Squire’s Tale

55, 56 And song—“softly call to thy side silence that speaks not unless (instead of silence) the Nightingale will sing” Philomela—(Gr. Philo—love, melos—song) nightingale, Philomel was the daughter of king Pandion. Her sister’s husband, prince Tereus of Thrace seduced her by misrepresentations, and she and her sister, Procne, conspired to kill Tereus’ son, but the plot failed When Tereus was going to kill them, Philomela was changed into a nightingale, Procne into a swallow, and Tereus into a hawk Deign a song—‘condescend to sing’ Less—unless.

57. In plight—‘plight’ admits of a double interpretation here It may mean either ‘strains’ or ‘sad condition’ It is difficult to say what exactly Milton means here

58-60 Smoothing ..yoke—“charming away the gloom, that makes night forbidding, with so sweet a strain that the Moon pauses over the oak in which she is wont to sing” Rugged brow—frowning look, repulsive appearance Cynthia—a surname of Diana,

feminine form of Cynthus, belonging to Cynthus, the mountain on which Diana, the moon-goddess, was born Dragon yoke—a pair of dragons Diann's chariot was drawn by a pair of dragons

61. Shunniest . folly—avoids singing in the day time.

62 Melancholy—The notes of the nightingale are plaintive

63 Chauntress—enchantress

64 Woo—court, seek; love. Even song—evening song.

65 I walk unseen—contrast this with l 57 of L'Allegro

66 Smooth-shaven green—neatly trimmed meadows, meadows having close-cropped grass

67 Noon—means either (1) the highest point, or (2) midnight, or (3) the nearly full size of the moon, the crescent being the morning of the moon

69 Like . astray—the poet fancies that the moon looks as if she has lost her way

70 Pathless way—is an oxymoron.

71 Bowed—stooped

72 Fleecy—like sheep's wool

71-72 As if cloud “behold the moon riding and often stooping, appearing as though she were bowing her head”

73 Plat—plot Rising ground—a platform

74 Curfeu—(Fr Couvre—cover, and feu—fire) It was a bell rung about nine o'clock in the evening as a signal for putting out all fires. The Norman rulers of England insisted on the custom, partly in order to prevent conspiracies and partly to ‘tame’ people.

75 Wide-water'd—“either bordering on wide water (the sea) or washed by the sea over a long stretch”

76 Swinging . roar—the word ‘roar’ may refer either to the ‘bell’ or to the ‘water’ If it refers to the sound of the bell then it means that the sound of the curfew bell which comes through the airs, is unwelcome or stern to the ears of the pensive man If the other interpretation is accepted, it would mean that “the shore is washed by the sea that breaks along it for miles”

77 Air—weather

78 Still removed—always secluded or remote

79. Glowing ambers—burning charcoal.

80 Teachgloom—"makes the light appear in the guise of darkness, play the part of darkness."

Notice that the pensive man wishes neither to have all light nor all darkness in his room, but a "twilight" midway between the two

81, 82. Far hearth—The pensive man does not like to be disturbed in his solitary place by any thing which is the concomitant of Mirth The only enjoyments which are acceptable to him in his loneliness are the sound of the cricket or the bell-man's sleepy sound or his books.

Cricket--a small shy insect which loves warmth.

83 Bellman—night watchman who patrolled the streets and called the hours, and warned people against thieves, fire, etc Drowsy—sleepy and dull, or causing sleep His voice is a 'drowsy charm' because it lulls people to sleep Of .

"Nor poppy nor mandragora,

Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,

Shall ever medicine thee to that sleep,

Which thou owedst yesterday "

—Shakespeare Othello

84 To .. harm—The bellman utters pious prayers wishing people safety against thieves, fire etc. Nightly—pertaining to night

87. Outwatch the Bear—As the Bear never goes below the horizon, this means that he will read during the whole night Out-watch—watch longer than the Bear, surpass the Bear in keeping the watch It is a poetic fancy that the stars keep watch in the sky. Bear is the name of a constellation

88 With—in the company of; i e in studying the works of Hermes Thrice-great Hermes—an ancient Egyptian philosopher named Thot or Theut, who was identified by the Greeks with their god Hermes (or Mercury, the messenger of gods) He was much respected by the Neo-Platonists A large number of works on the secrets of nature, really composed in the fourth century A. D, were ascribed to him He was called Trimegistus (i e thrice-great or

greatest of the great) The word "thrice" has no reference to number, as it denotes quality, not quantity. Or unsphere, Plato—bring Plato back from the station assigned to him in heaven. The literal meaning is, 'Disentangle the doctrine of Plato by the profound study of his writings, the metaphor is, 'Bring back the disembodied spirit of Plato from those invisible regions where it is now insphered.' If Penseroso wishes to know Plato's doctrine about the state of the soul after death, as expounded in the *Phaedo* and other works. The word sphere has a reference to the Ptolemaic system of astronomy in which the earth was regarded as the centre of a series of concentric spheres, where the souls of the dead were supposed to dwell. Plato—a Greek philosopher of world-wide fame (429-347 B. C.) who expounded the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. To unfold—in order to reveal.

90 Hold—contain

91, 92 That hath . rook--that has left the human body

93. Demons -spirits

94 Flood ground—in water or under earth. These demons were called Salamanders, Sylphs, Nymphs, and Gnomes.

95 Power—nature Consent—sympathy, connection.

96 With planet ..element—The reference is to the popular superstition that the spirits of air, water etc., had a connection with the planets and the elements, and could control the influence of the stars and the events in nature. Element—It was formerly thought that all existing things were made of the four elements, fire, air, water, and earth.

97, 98 Sometime . ..by—let me sometime read a tragedy dealing with the misfortunes of kings &c., and see it acted in my imagination. The allusion appears to be to the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Gorgeous—The Greeks regarded the misfortunes of kings and heroes as the true province of tragedy, hence the word gorgeous. The reference is also to the magnificent

robes worn by tragic actors. Sceptred pall - roval robes Sweep-
ing by - walking in a dignified manner. The reference is to the
tail which trails behind the mantle

99 Presenting—representing Thebes—some stories in con-
nection with 'Thebes' Thebes was the capital of Boeotia, and
"the scene of Aeschylus" *Seven Against Thebes*, Sophocles'
Oedipus the King and *Antigone*, and Euripides' *Bacchae*. Pelop's
line—descendants of Pelops, who founded the state of Peloponnesus.
The reference is to the *Electra* of Sophocles and to the three
tragedies of Aeschylus on the murder of Agamemnon a descendant
of Pelops

100 -The tale divine -The reference is to the episode in
the history of the Trojan War—e g Homer's *Iliad* Troy is called
divine because it was believed to have been built by the gods

101, 102 The reference in these lines is 'unmistakably to
Shakespeare's tragedies What—any tragedy Later age—modern
times Ennobled hath—has made glorious Buskined stage—
tragedy

103. Sad Virgin—Melancholy O that—I wish that etc
Thy power—"the deep research of a thoughtful man"

104 Raise—recall Musaeus—a mythical Greek bard who is
said to have been the son of Orpheus Bower—a shady grove,
(here) the Elysian fields

106 Warbled string—sung to the accompaniment of his
lyre

107 Drew cheek—melted even the hard heart of Pluto;
made even the inexorable Pluto relent

108 See Notes in L' Allegro ll 149-150

109. Him—Chaucer, the first great poet of England who lived
in the fourteenth century Half told—incomplete

110 The story bold—The reference is to *the Squire's Tale*
which Chaucer left incomplete The story goes that one day when
Cambuscan (Changez Khan) was holding a festival a messenger
announced that the king of Arabia and India had sent him three
presents, (1) a brass steed which could carry its rider through the

air any distance within twenty four hours, (2) a mirror which revealed future events—e.g. the falseness of lovers or subjects; and (3) a ring which enabled its wearer to understand and converse with birds, and know the properties of all the herbs

111 Camball, Algarsife—sons of Cambuscan

112 Canace—was the daughter of Cambuscan. Her husband's name is not mentioned by Chaucer To wife—as wife.

113 That—refers to Canace Virtuous—miraculous, possessing magic or supernatural powers

116 If aught else—whatever other stories Great beside—other great poets The reference is to Tasso, Ariosto, and Spenser

117 Sage and solemn—wise and full of dignity

118 Turneys—tournament Trophies hung—prizes of war or arms hung up as memorials of victory on wall

119 Enchantments drear—dreadful magic spells.

120 Where ear—i.e. the poems have an allegorical significance. That is in addition to the evident meaning they have a hidden meaning—they are so frequent with suggestions The reference is to Spenser's *Faerie Queene*

Lines 121-166. These lines describe the day as it is enjoyed by the Thoughtful man He likes to see the day introduced by storm and rain When the sun appears, he likes to go to a solitary place near some brook and be lulled asleep by the murmuring sound of the waters and the song of the bee He wishes, that, while asleep, he may see some strange and wonderful dreams, and may hear divine music when he wakes up Finally he likes to go to the church for a service

121 Thus—while I am thus busy Pale career—course through the colourless sky

122 Civil suited—in plain and simple dress like that of a citizen,—not in court dress

123 Tricked and frounced—profusely adorned and with hair extravagantly curled

124 The Attic Boy—Cephalus, an Athenian youth, loved by Eos (Aurora), the goddess of the Dawn Attic—belonging to Attica

125 Kercheft—with hēr head covered in a kerchief. A 'kerchief' is an embroidered cloth for the head worn by women Comely—beautiful, becoming.

126 Rocking—making to rock, moving the branches of trees to and fro Piping—whistling.

127. Ushered—introduced; heralded by Still—gentle

128 Blown his fill—"blown as long or as violently as was enough to satisfy him" Him—its

129 Ending—(to be taken with gust) terminating.

130 Minute drops—drops that fall at intervals of a minute—
C/ Minute-guns From off—falling down from

131 Fling—throw

132 Flaring beams—glaring beams, beams shining brightly.

133 Arched groves—groves overshadowed by the intertwining branches of trees, and having such half light as there is in the twilight

134 Brown—dark Sylvan—the god of the fields and forests

135 Monumental oak—massive oak, oak which on account of its old age reminds people of the bygone ages Explaining the use of the word "monumental" here Keightley thinks that Milton applies this word to oak "because the monuments in churches were often formed of carved oak"

136 Rude—cruel Heaved—uplifted

137 Nymphs—wood Nymphs (Dryads) which haunted the forest. Daunt—terrify; frighten

138 Fright—frighten Hallowed haunt—the haunt sacred to them

140 Profaner—"somewhat profane" a (Latinism), unsympathetic

141. Garish—gandy, glaring, bright Eye—light

143 Flowery work—i.e. collecting honey from flowers

145 Consort—union of sounds, other sounds of nature as accompany the humming of bees etc.

146. Entice—induce Dewy feathered sleep—"sleep whose reathers have been stamped in Lethæan dew, which they drop on

the eyes of those who are to be cast into slumber", refreshing sleep

148 Wave—"move to and fro" Wings—of sleep Aery stream—a series of pictures that are not substantial.

149 Of portraiture—vivid and lifelike

147-150 Masson thus paraphrases this passage.—"Let some strange mysterious dream wave (that is, move to and fro) at his (that is, sleep's) wings, in an airy stream of lively images displayed before my inward vision" That is let me dream a strange dream made up of a number of lifelike images

151 Breathe—play, let me hear sweet music as I wake

153 Spirit—angel Good—may refer to 'mortals' or 'spirit'
In the case of 'spirit' it means 'beneficent'

154 Genius—guardian spirit

155 Due—accustomed or bound by the sense of duty

156 Studious Cloister's pale—The enclosure of a college
"Observe, only at this point of the poem is *Il Penseroso* in contact with his fellow-creatures Throughout the rest he was solitary' (Masson) The description is that of the quadrangle of Cambridge college, surrounded by corridors

157. High-embowed—loftily arched

158 Antic—'ornamented'—Massy proof—proof against the heavy burden they have to support

159 Storied—windows of stained glass having stories from Scriptures represented on them. Richly dight—beautifully adorned

160 Religious light—a light which makes one fall into divine contemplation

162 To—in accompaniment to (the song of) Full-Voiced—singing in a chorus Quire—a band of singers in a church

163 High—solemn Anthem clear—sacred songs clearly sung.

164 As—such as Through mine ear—as I hear the anthems

165 Dissolve ..ecstasies—so affect my mind as to throw me into transports of joy

166 Bring, eyes—(so meet my soul that) I may "almost learn the secret of divine things"

Lines 167-174 The thoughtful man wishes to retire in his old age to a hermitage and live there like a monk, and pass his time in acquiring a thorough knowledge of astronomy and botany, and to become so wise as to utter wisdom like a prophet.

167. Weary age - old age worn out with cares and sorrows, &c.

168. Peaceful hermitage - a secluded place where I may retire peacefully.

169. Hairy gown - coarse dress of hermits or monks. Mossy - overgrown with moss.

170. Spell - study, construe.

171. Of - "truth concerning"

173, 174. Till old age strain "with years would come the power of rising in lofty contemplation into the region of inspiration and of prophecy." (Chamber)

175, 176. "Note that the conditional nature of Milton's acceptance of Melancholy is not so distinctly expressed as that of Mirth." (Bell)

LYCIDAS

Lycidas - is a common name of shepherds in the pastoral poems of Virgil and Theocritus. **Monody** - an elegy in which there is a single mourner. **Bewails** - laments the loss of. **A learned friend** - Edward King. **Passage** - voyage. **Chester** - the country town of Cheshire situated on the right bank of the Dee. **Highth** - at the height of their power.

Lines 1-14. In these lines the occasion of the poem - the death of Lycidas - is stated.

1. Yet once more - i.e. although I had determined not to write any more verses for some years to come. Milton had written no poetry after writing *Comus* because he was waiting for the time of maturity when he might produce something worthy of note. **Laurels** - The laurel was sacred to Apollo, god of song.

2 Myrtles—The myrtle was sacred to Venus. It is associated with poetry Brown—dark With as well as Ivy was sacred to Bicchus, the god of wine It is also associated with poetry Never sere—over-green

3. I come &c. I come to write a poem Harsh and crude bitter and unripe, because plucked before their proper time Milton represents himself as writing poetry before the time of his maturity as a poet

1 Forced—unwilling, compelled because he did not consider himself fitted for writing such poetry as he wished Rude because he does not mind the unripe state of the berries

5 Shatter—scatter by force Mellowing year—time of maturity, the season when fruits ripen

6 Bitter constraint a sad necessity which compels Dear—touching closely, near to the heart Disturb—due pluck you before your due season That is writing a poem before my poetic powers are sufficiently mature to write one

8 Lycidas Edw King Ere his prime—before attaining the fullness of manhood

9 Peer—equal

10 Who Lycidas?—A rhetorical question, equivalent to “no one could refuse to sing in honour of Lycidas” Sing—mourn

10, 11 Knew sing—he too was a poet Build rhyme—compose stately verses Build refers to the regular structure of the verse Rhyme—verse

12 Watery bier—because King was drowned Bier means a frame on which a dead body is carried to the grave

13 Unwept—Without any mourning, without any elegy Welter—roll about, be tossed about By—by means of Parching—dry.

14 Meed—recompense Melodious tear—elegy, “tuneless expression of sorrow”

Lines 15-22. Milton begins the theme of the poem by invoking the Muses

15 Begin—your mournful song Sisters. well—the nine Muses, daughters of Jove, who were supposed to preside over literature, art, and science The 'sacred well' is the fountain Aganippe on Mount Helicon in Boeotia It was sacred to the Muses

16 Seat of Jove—mount Olympus Spring rise; issue

17. Somewhat loudly neither too loudly nor too softly Sweep the string strike or play upon the lyre

18 Hence with—get rid of; discard Denial vain—useless denial Coy excuse—hesitating excuse due to shyness.

19 Muse—a poet inspired by the Muse

20 Lucky words—word expressive of good luck, auspicious words Favour. urn—write good things about me when I am dead Urn—a vessel in which the ashes of the dead were deposited, hence death Destined Urn—the death that I am destined to die.

21 As he passes—by my grave; in passing Turn—may turn towards my grave.

22 Bid shroud—pray that sweet peace may rest upon me Sable shroud—black coffin Here 'shroud' stands for death

Lines 23-36 These lines describe, under the veil of pastoral language, Milton's life at Cambridge in company with Edward King

23 Nursed. hill a pastoral way of saying 'we were educated at the same college (Christ's College, Cambridge)

24 Fed flock—followed the same pursuits Fountain rill—i.e., in the class-room as well as on the playground

25 High lawns—upland stretches of grassy ground

26 Under morn—at dawn, 'Morn' is here personified

27 Drove—our flocks Affield—to the pasture, 'a' is a corruption of 'on'

28 What time—at the time at which Gray-fly—the trumpet fly which hums sharply at noon. Winds her 'sultry horn'—makes a sharp humming sound at noon

29 Battenling—fattening, feeding With—at the time of.
Fresh night—the dew that falls in the evening

30 Oft modifies 'battenling' Star the evening star called Venus.

31. Heaven's descent—the horizon. Stopped wheel-driven his chariot towards the west; had set

32 Rural ditties—country songs; the early poetic efforts of Milton and King Were not mute—were sung (by us).

33 Tempered—set to the music of; timed. Oaten flute—a flute or pipe made of reeds—a favourite musical instrument of the shepherd.

34 Satyrs . heel—pastoral names for Milton's contemporaries at Cambridge Satyrs—woodland deities represented in Greek mythology as half men and half goats, who were fond of light pleasures such as playing on the pipe, dancing, etc Fauns The Fauns of Roman mythology were regarded as identical with the Satyrs. Cloven heel—having cloven heel because supposed to be half goats

36. Damocetus—the name of one of Virgil's shepherds—probably refers to Dr Chappel, who was tutor to both Milton and King Our song—probably refers to their College exercises

Lines 37-49. The poet in these lines expresses his own sense of sorrow at the death of Lycidas

37 Heavy—oppressive, sorrowful Now thou now that thou

38. Never must return—thou wilt certainly never come back to life

39 Thee—is the object of 'mourn' in l. 11

40 Wild thyme—a kind of aromatic plant, which grows up itself in profusion Gadding—growing like a creeper; straggling

41 Their echoes—the echoes of the woods and the caves

42 Willow—a kind of cane tree It is a symbol of mourning Hazel copses green—thickets of green hazel trees

44. Fanning .leaves—waving their leaves like fans in unison with the music. The Figure of speech here is Pathetic Fallacy which attributes feelings to inanimate objects

45. Killing deadly ; destructive. Canker—a kind of insect that feeds on roses

46 Taint worm — a small, red spider that causes disease in cattle Weanling newly weaned, young animals that have been newly separated from their mother's milk

47 Gay wardrobe dresses of bright and varied colours. Wardrobe means a chest in which clothes are kept, and by the figure Metonymy the container is used for the contained (i.e. clothes)

48 White thorn — hawthorn Blows — blossoms That is in early spring

49 Such — so killing To shepherd's ear — when heard by them

Lines 50-57. The guardian Nymphs could not prevent king's death

50 Where were etc. — This appeal is in imitation of Greek and Latin pastorals Remorseless — cruel, pitiless

52 Steep some Welsh mountain overlooking the place of shipwreck Perhaps Milton refers to Penmæn-mawr

53 Bards — poets Druids — The priest of the ancient Britons Lie — are buried This line suggests that Milton is thinking of Cerrig-of-Druidon in Denbighshire.

54. Shaggy — wooded Mona the isle of Anglesea

55 Deva — the river Dee, which formed the ancient boundary between England and Wales The town of Chester is situated on the banks of it, and it was from Chester that King sailed Wisard Stream — magical current The allusion is to the belief that "being the ancient boundary line between England and Wales, the Dee foreboded evil fortune to that country towards which it changed its course and good to the other"

56 Ay .dream ' Alas ' I am foolishly indulging in idle dreams.

57. Had there that is the dream For . done ? — Even your presence would have been of no avail

Lines 58-63 - the Muse herself could not prevent King's death, though he were her son

58 The Muse—Calliope the music of Epic poetry and mother of Orpheus

59 Her enchanting son—Orpheus

60. Universal both animate and inanimate

61 Rout a disorderly crowd Hideous roar—the noise of wild and ill-mannered merriment.

62 Gory—stained with blood Visage—head and face

63 Hebrus—a river in Thrace Lesbian shore—the coast of Lesbos, a town on the opposite bank of the Hebrus When by shore Orpheus, in his grief for the loss of his wife Euridice, treated the Thracian women with contempt, while they were celebrating a feast in honour of Bacchus, and they, in revenge tore him to pieces, and threw his head and his lyre into the Hebrus

Lines 64-84—In these lines Milton digresses from the main theme, and expresses his views concerning the office of the true poet and the nature of his reward

64 What boots it—of what use or advantage is it? Incessant—constant, ceaseless Care devotion.

65 To tend—to attend to, follow, cultivate Homely and slighted—refer to trade Shepherd's trade—profession of poetry

66 Strictly—devotedly, rigorously Meditate practise Meditate muse—practising the thankless task of writing poetry

67. Use are accustomed to do, are habituated etc etc

68,69 Amaryllis, Neaera—names of shepherdesses in the Greek and Latin pastorals. Sport dally; play. Tangles—locks, curls.

64-69 What is the use of cultivating poetry when poetry is regarded as low and mean by profession? Would it not be proper, like others, to lead a life of ease and dalliance

70. Fame. raise—fame is the incentive that incites the noble and pure mind to high efforts

71 Last infirmity the longing after fame is a weakness that is most difficult to avoid

73. Fair -beautiful ; attractive Guerdon reward.

74. And . blaze and expect that we will shine forth in a sudden flash of fame

75 Blind Fury . . shears -Atropos, one of the three Fates, who cut rounder the thread of human life Atropos is called a *Fury* because the event of King's death was an act which might be attributed to one of the Furies, and *blind* because a Fury makes no discrimination as to her victims Abhorred shears - hateful scissors with which the thread of life was cut off

76 Slits -cuts off Thin-spun life the slender or fragile thread of life, in allusion to the frailty of human life "But .. praise," but does not cut off the praise due to him

77 Phoebus the god of song Touched ears "touched the ears of me trembling", "touched my ears which trembled at his touch" Masson thinks that the ear is mentioned because, according to the popular superstition, the tingling of a person's ear is a sign that people are talking of him Conington says that the action of touching a man's ear was a symbolical way of recalling a matter to his memory, the ear being regarded as the seat of memory

78 Mortal soil this earth

79 Glistening glittering Foil—a thin leaf of gold or silver placed under a gem to increase its lustre

80 Set off to -displayed to Broad rumour—wide reputation

78-80 Fame cannot be found in this world It does not dwell either in the flashy splendour of success displayed for show, or in popular applause.

81. By—by means of Pure—divine, clear

82 Perfect witness -searching and infallible judgment. All-judging Jove God who sees and knows everything

83 Pronounces lastly—gives His final judgment

84 Meed -reward

Lines. 85-102 Milton returns to the main theme and says that Neptune was not to blame for the death of his friend

85 Arethuse—a celebrated fountain near Syracuse, the native place of Theocritus, the most famous of the Greek pastoral poets

86 Minieus—the river Minio, in N Italy, a tributary of the Po, near which Virgil was born Minieus symbolises Latin pastoral verse, and is called *honoured* because it recalls Virgil to one's mind
Crowned reeds—associated with Virgil's pastoral poetry.

87 That strain—the voice of Apollo Higher—loftier; sublime

88 My oat—my oaten pipe; my pastoral verse.

89 Herald of the sea—Triton, son of Neptune, the herald of the sea-gods, represented by the Romans as having a "crested horn" by which he stilled the waves of the sea.

90 That plea—that appeared to defend Neptune from the suspicion of having caused King's death

91 Asked enquired of Felon—wicked, felonious; cruel

92 Hard—sad Doomed swain—caused the death of the gentle shepherd, i.e. king.

93 Of rugged wings—having rugged wings, tempestuous

94 Beaked pointed, projecting Promontory—cape

96 Hippotades—Eolus, son of Illyotes, god of the wind, which were kept by him in a dungeon

97. Was had Strayed escaped

98 Calm—still Level brine the placid sea

99 Sleek—tender; soft Panope—one of the hundred daughters of the sea-god Nereus

100 Fatal hark Ill-fated and treacherous ship in which King sailed

101 Built eclipse eclipses were believed to bring misfortunes upon all undertakings commenced or done while they lasted
Rigged fitted up with sails, ropes etc Dark—evil Rigged dark evil curses formed her rigging, or curses being uttered by witches when it was being fitted up. *cf. witches or of misfortune*
102 Low—deep Sacred—set apart or devoted (to death)

Lines 103-107 — Camus, representing Cambridge, mourns the loss of King

103 Camus—"God of the river Cam, and the personification of Cambridge University" Revered sire venerable father Jerram notes that "sire" is the common word applied to a river as a protecting power Footing slow flowing sluggishly, in allusion to the old age of the "revered sire"

104. His sedge—with river-sponge and sedges floating on its waters Sedge—a kind of coarse grass that grows on the banks of rivers *from the sedge-moss*

105 Inwrought dim—"having indistinct markings worked into it" Figures dim—"symbolical devices and representations faded with age"

The idea is that the needs of Camus are the grief for the loss of the figure
106 Sanguine woe The Hyacinth Hyacinthus was killed by Lephyrus, and from his blood sprang the hyacinth. Hence it is called Sanguine—(blood-stained). Inscribed with woe The petals of the hyacinth bear the letters u, ai, exclamations of grief

107. Reft—deprived me of Quoth said Pledge—child, pledge, of love between husband and wife King was a most promising undergraduate of Cambridge.

Lines 108-112 St. Peter, the guardian of the Church, sorely feels the loss of king as a true son

108 Last go—St Peter came last and was the last to go from the scene of morning

109 The Pilot lake St Peter, who had a boat on the sea of Galilee before he became a disciple of Christ

110 Massy—big, massive Keys of the "Kingdom of Heaven" given to St Peter by Jesus Christ Of Twain of two different metals (*poetic for two*)

111. Opes—opens the gates of Heaven Amain—with force

112 Mitred locks—head covered with a bishop's crown, Stern bespake—spoke sternly or indignantly

Lines 113-131. In these lines Milton again makes a digression from the main theme, condemns the false bishops and clergy of the time, and predicts their ruin

113 Well gladly or easily Spared for thee—given up in exchange for you

114 Enow enough; any number of the corrupt clergy of the time For sake—for the sake of getting a living; for the greed of gain

115 Creep climb—those who enter the church in a stealthy way, those who thrust themselves in, and those who join in order to rise to high places Fold—"the church is a sheepfold into which the corrupt clergy intrude themselves; their only care being to share the endowments of the church"

116 Of make they donot trouble themselves with any other things

117. Scramble eagerly and rudely striving to seize their share Shearer's feast an entertainment given by shepherds in spring to celebrate the day on which they cut the wool off the sheep. Scramble feast i.e. they donot care for any thing other than competing with one another in order to obtain church livings

118 Shove away—move aside; displace Worthy . guest—the man in whose honour the feast is celebrated The reference is to the conscientious clergy

119 Blind mouths—blind gluttons or blind guides, "whose Gospel is their maw." "These two monosyllables express the precisely accurate contraries of right character in the two great offices of the church those of bishop and pastor A bishop means one who sees Pastor means one who feeds The most unbishoply character a man can have is therefore to be blind. The most unpastoral is, instead of feeding, to want to be fed—to be a Mouth" Ruskin that . book who scarcely know anything about the work of a shepherd (church minister) A sheep hook is the crook by which shepherds extricate sheep when they get into a place from where they cannot get out.

120. Aught—anything The least—in the least.
121. Faithful herdsman honest clergyman Art office
122 What .. them—what do they care What they they
donot seem to stand in need of it They are sped—they have
succeeded in gaining their object *without professed (to) ends*

123 List *(to explain to)* *(to show)* like. Lean songs—their teaching which
is without substance and spiritual sustenance (*unsubstantial &*)

124. Grate straw—produce a harsh sound by means of their
weak (or thin)—and wretched—pieces That is they preach unwhole-
some doctrines very badly

125 The hungry sheep the neglected congregation Look
up for spiritual sustenance Are not fed receive no sustenance

126 Swollen ... draw with minds corrupted by unsound and
pernicious doctrines which they imbibe (or hear)

127 Rot spread—have their faiths corrupted, and spread
false doctrines

128 Besides &c in addition to this injury there is one more
evil What &c the number of converts The grimwolf the
Roman catholic church, with special reference to the Romanising
influence of Laud's party Privy paw—by stealthy attacks

129 Devours apace—converts rapidly Nothing said—No
attempt is made to check the evil

130 Two-handed Engine—the instrument of retribution
This phrase has been explained in several different ways by com-
mentators: *engine—(ingenium, skill) then modern*
two handed engine is the axe or sword w
with both hands

(i) That Milton refers to the execution of Laud which took
place eight years later (1645) But this view may be dismissed
because Laud was at the height of his power at the time of the
publication of Lycidas

X(ii) That the axe is that alluded to metaphorically in the Scrip-
tures as the instrument of reformation (Matt 11-10) *(things & sin)*
the axe laid to the root

(iii) That he refers to the sword of justice (Rev 1-16)

(iv) That he refers to the powers of the Gospel as contained in the Testaments.

(v) That he means the two houses of the English Parliament.

(vi) That it denotes civil and ecclesiastical power. At the door—quite ready; ready at hand

131 Smite ~~more~~ — to strike a final blow, to strike a death blow

Lines 132-151. The poet returns to the main theme of the elegy. All nature may well mourn the loss of Lycidas.

132. Return Alpheus—the pastoral is again resumed masterfully Milton assumes that the Alpheus and the Sicilian muse had gone away ashamed while St. Peter was denouncing the clergy. Alpheus was a river god who loved Arethusa and pursued her. Notice the transition from the Christian to the heathen.

Dread voice— of St. Peter.

133 That streams—^{that interrupted the [?] of the} which interrupted my pastoral muse. Sicilian muse—the muse of pastoral verse, called 'Sicilian' because Theocritus, the founder of pastoral verse, belonged to Sicily.

134 Hither east—come hither and east (on this hearth)

135 Bells—bell-shaped flowers. Flowerets—little flowers.

136 Mild whispers gentle murmurs. Use dwell; haunt.

137. Of—i.e. mild whispers of. Wanton—unrestrained

138 Lap—bosom. The Swart-star ^{Sun} the dog-star. It appeared at the hottest time of the year, and was supposed by the Greeks and Romans to cause the great heat. Swart 'darkened by heat' Specially rarely. The influence of the dog star is scarcely felt, therefore the flowers are fresh and bright.

139 Quaint eyes,—dainty and bright flowers. The centre of a blossom is sometimes called its eye.

140 Suck showers—imbibe the sweet and refreshing rain

141 Purple give a purple tint. Vernal flowers flowers that blow in the spring

JUDSON'S MILTON AND HIS POETRY

in love or even the coffee table

- 112 Rathe—early; that blossoms early in the spring.
Forsaken dies—"that dies because it is forsaken by the sun-
light, a reference to the fact that it is often found in shady places"
- 113 Tufted crow-toe—a kind of hyacinth having a tuft at the
top
- 114 Pink—a kind of flower Pansy—a kind of violet Freak-
1 with jet having dark spots in the centre of its blossoms.
- 116 Well-attired woodbine—honeysuckle having a beautiful
ead-dress (of flowers)
- 117 Cowslip—a flower akin to the primrose Wan—pale-
looking.
- 118 Sad embroidery—"colours suited to mourning"
Milton's original reading was
- 119 Amaranthus—a plant the flowers of which last long with-
out withering
- 150 Tear—"The dew-drops resting in the hollow of the lilies
here spoken of as tears shed for Lycidas"
151. Laureat hearse—the poet's tomb The word 'laureat'
signifies that king was a poet or that he had obtained an academical
degree Lycid Lycidas

Lines 142-151. "These lines form the most exquisite flower-and-
dew passage in all Milton's poetry. For musical sweetness and
vibrant richness of floral colour, it beats perhaps anything else in all
Milton. It is the call upon all valleys of the landscape and the
banks of all the sweet streamlets, to yield up their choicest flowers,
and those dearest to shepherds, that they may be strewn over the
dead body of Lycidas" *Mason before Milton res*

Lines 152-164. Sorrow loses itself in "false surmise," and Hope-
sues.

152 For ease—for in this manner in order to comfort our-
selves for a while

153. Let dally - let us please our weak fancies by imagining.
with false surmise—wrong fancies, that we have actually the
 corpse of Lycidas to strew flowers on it

151 Whilst - when I indulge in this fancy.

156 Hebrides - a group of islands scattered along the west coast of Scotland - *Supposed to be*

157. Whelming - overhelming

158 The bottom . world - the bottom of the sea inhabited by monsters

159 To our . denied - your body being denied to our prayers accompanied by tears

161 Fable of . old - the fabled abode of the old Cornish giant Bellerus, a name coined by Milton to represent one of the mythical giants of Cornwall, after Bellerum the Latin name for Land's End in Cornwall

161 The great vision - the vision of the Archangel Michael The guarded Mount St Michael's Mount in Cornwall "St Michael is said to have appeared as a 'vision' on this Mount, and it was therefore named after him Guarded - by the Archangel, "protected (there was a fortress on the hill)

162 Namaneos in the provinces of Gallia in Spain Bayona - is also in Gallia Hold - stronghold, fortress

163 Look Angel St. Michael is asked to cease looking towards Spain and to look at the coast of Cornwall instead while the corpse of Lycidas is floating Ruth - pity

164 Dolphins - sea-animals The allusion is to the story of Arion's escape from the sea Arion, a Greek bard when on a voyage to Corinth, was thrown into the sea by the sailors By the power of his music he charmed the sea-animals and reached his destination safely on the backs of dolphins Waft - carry swiftly

Lines 165-185 The elegy ends with a strain of joy and hope Sorrow gives place to consolation that though no longer present here, King is alive in the other world

165 Woeful - full of woe, sorrowful

166 Your sorrow - the object of your sorrow.

167 Watery floor—the surface of sea.

168 Day-star—the sun Ocean bed—bottom of the sea

169 Anon soon after, i.e. at sunrise Repairs head—
resumes his brightness.

170 Tricks displays New-spangled are—newly-studded
netil (gold); bright golden rays, Spangle is a small plate of shining
metal.

171. Flames --shines brightly

172 So -- i.e. like the sun that goes down below the sea in the
evening and reappears next morning Mounted high -- i.e. in
Paradise

173. Dear ..him -- 'Dear' is a Transferred Epithet which applies
to 'him' (Christ). That waves the reference is to Christ's
miracle of walking on the sea (Matt XIV) Walked --ruled

174. Other i.e. different from these of the earth

175. Nectar the drink of the gods, fragrant water Oozy -
wet with sea water Laves -washes

176. Unexpressive inexpressive Nuptial song—marriage
song The allusion is to the marriage of the Lamb (Rev 6-7) In
Biblical language Christ is the bridegroom with whom the saints are
made one in marriage

177. Blest meek --the happy abodes of the meek.

179 Solemn troops ceremonious assemblies

180 In move—move in the midst of heavenly radiance

181. Wipe eyes—admit him to everlasting joy

182 Now that they know you are in heaven.

183. Henceforth .. shore -- "It is common in Latin poetry to
represent a drowned person as becoming the genius or guardian
spirit of the locality where he met his fate, his office being to prevent
future voyagers from like disaster."

184. In recompense --as thy great reward Good—kind.

185 Wander flood—sail over that dangerous sea

Lines 186-190. In these lines the poet reviews the shepherd's song

186 Uncouth swain -- unknown shepherd

187 Sandals grey : c at the grey dawn The shepherd began to sing at day break, but he continued till evening

188. He quills-- i c he passed through various moods and sung in various metres Stops or vent-holes are the small holes over which the fingers of the player are placed Qill--a reed

189 Eager thought keen care Doric lay--pastoral song. Theocritus wrote his pastorals in the Doric dialect of the Greek language.

191. Stretched hills--lengthened the shadows of the hills because it was evening.

191 Was--bird

192 Twitched--grasped and pulled tightly around him, Mantle blue--blue is the colour of a shepherd's dress

193 To-morrow .. new--i c I shall take up some other subject soon, now that this elegy is at an end

ON HIS HAVING ARRIVED AT THE AGE OF TWENTY THREE

(Page 37 of the Text)

1. Subtle thief of youth Time is called the subtle thief of youth because it takes away youth quickly without one's being conscious of it Subtle--surreptitious, which comes imperceptibly. Cf Pope's "Time, the thief of life"

2 Wing--is in keeping with the idea of 'quickly' Stolen ... year! Milton was now in his twenty-fourth year.

3 Hasting--going away quickly. Full career--full speed.

4 No bud showeth does not show any sign of my inward maturity; appears to be fruitless

5 Semblance—external appearance Deceive the truth—
convey a wrong impression of the fact

7 Inward ripeness - maturity of mind

8 Timely—happy—whom time makes happy or who are fortunate in being gifted with those qualities which come at the proper time, whom time favours Endu'th—endoweth, is gifted to

9. Or soon—whether soon -It—refers to 'inward ripeness.'

10 Ev'n—in proportion to It shall be strictly in accordance with the lot which Heaven has intended for me Still—continually.

11 Mean—humble, not something in a middle state

13 All is . all is even "My first consideration is to use my powers as one who is conscious that God constantly sees and judges my work."

14 Task-master's eye—This alludes to the parable of the labourers in the vineyard (vide Matthew x) Browne quotes from the Passages from a Working Life—"In the library at Langley near Horton, the emblematic eye still looks down from the painted panel on the shelves laden with old-world learning, and on the catalogue, that hangs by them, dated the very year of Milton's continental journey Charles Knight, visiting the library, noticed the decoration, and connected it with the last line of this sonnet"

TO THE NIGHTINGALE

(Page 43 of the Text)

1 Nightingale—It comes to England about the middle of April Yon—yonder Bloomy—blooming, covered with blossom Spray—sprig

2 Warblest—art in the habit of warbling, art wont to warble When . still—when perfect silence reigns in the woods, when we do not hear the songs of other birds

3 Thou fill—there was a tradition among the lovers that it was a token of happiness to hear the nightingale before the cuckoo Fresh—renewed

4 Jolly Hours—bright or comely hours, spring. The Horae (Hours) were the goddesses of the seasons according to classical mythology. Their course was described as the dance of the Horae. Lead on—guide, act as a herald Propitious—(lit. flying forward) favourable, fortunate. May was regarded as favourable to lovers.

5. Liquid—sweet, flowing easily, beautiful and charming Close.. day—the song of the nightingale acts as a lullaby and makes the day asleep.

6 Shallow—unmusical The notes of the cuckoo are “shallow” as compared to those of the nightingale Bill—song. The figure of Speech here is ‘synecdoche’

7. Portend—foretell.

8 Humorous power—power over the pursuits of lovers, or pertaining to the affairs of lovers

9 Timely—opportunely, at the proper time. Bird of hate—The hated bird. The cuckoo is hated by the smaller birds

10. Hopeless doom—bad luck. That I am not to succeed in my love affair.

11 As—since. Too . . relief—too late to relieve me.

12 Yetwhy—yet there was no reason for you to sing so late

14. Both them—both of them Train—company, crew.

TO MR H. LAWES, ON HIS AIRS

(Page 57 of the Text).

1. Harry—this intimate form of address suggests that there was personal affection between Milton and Lawes

2 Tuneful and well-measured song—Bell quotes the following by way of explanation .—“He (Lawes) communicated to verse an original and expressive melody, he exceeded his predecessors and contemporaries in a pathos and sentiment, a simplicity and propriety, an articulation and intelligibility which so naturally adapt themselves to the words of the poet”

3. Just note and accent—that is the melody was suited to the words and the accent of the music was suited to the accent of the language. Sean with Midas' ears—To commit a stupid blunder in matching the melody and the words When Apollo and Pan contended to sing. Midas, the king of Phrygia, who was the umpire, decided in favour of Pan Apollo thereupon became indignant and changed his ears into those of an ass.

4 Committing .. long—setting at variance short and long (unaccented and accented) syllables.

5 Exempts—makes you prominent over all the rest

6 Envy—envious people. Wan—pale.

7. After age—coming generations Writ—written, your name shall be mentioned etc.

8 Humour—adapt That is you could be represented as one who could best adapt or suit his music to the English tongue.

9. Send . thee—must give you a respectable name

10 Priest—leader, chief Phœbus' quire—the choir of Phœbus or Apollo, the god of music.

11. Happiest—expressed most happily Story—the reference is to the story of Ariadne by Cartwright, which was set to music by Lanes.

12--14 DantePurgatory—In his Purgatorio, Canto 11. 76--114, Dante tells us how among a crowd of souls newly arrived in Purgatory for the purging of their sins he saw his friend Casella, a Florentine celebrated for his skill in music, and how he entreated him to sing Purgatory—is the intermediate place or state between Heaven and Hell where souls are purified, and it is milder in comparison with Hell.

ON HIS BLINDNESS

(Page 131 of the Text)

1. Consider—think Light—eyesight Spent—exhausted ; spent up.

2 Ere days—"have been spent" Milton was totally blind when he was 14 years old Dark . . . Wide--these words, spoken by blind man, have a pathos of their own

3 One talent—talent—"a natural gift or ability" Milton claims to have received only one talent, and compares himself to the servant in the Bible (Matt xvi) who had received only one talent Death to hide—to hide or keep one's powers unemployed is tantamount to the ultimate loss of those powers (or mental and spiritual death)

4 Useless—in an active state More bent—is more bent or determined

6 My true account give a faithful account of how I have spent my life (used my faculties) Returning chide—on his return reprove me for being so negligent

7 Doth day-labour—this is in allusion to a verse in the Bible, St John, iv, 4 "We must work the works of him that send me, while it is day, the night cometh, when no man can work" Light denied—if or when one is deprived of eyesight

8 Fondly—foolishly I foolishly ask the above question.

9 Murmur—complaint

10 Either . gifts—God is quite independent of man's worship or the gifts which he bestows upon him

11. Bear . yoke—That is serve in accordance with his Divine commands, which are by no means strict

12 Thousands—of angels Bidding command

13 Post—hasten, run in post-haste

14 They .. wait—those who submit themselves to the will of God, also serve him well

TO CYRIACK SKINNER

(Page 132 of the Text)

1. This ..day—three years ago this day. Though .. view—though outwardly they appeared to be uninjured

2. Of... spot—his eyesight was perfect three years ago. There was no spot in them or any other defect

3 Bereft - deprived Seeing have forgot - have forgotten (or lost their power) how to see

4. Idle orbs - eyeballs which have no use now

5. Of sun - Either of sun ('either' is understood)

7. Bate hope - do not lose either courage or hope Bate. -bate, diminish, lessen.

8 Bear up .. onward - exercise fortitude and patience in my trouble, and keep my daily progress, (i.e., perform my daily work).

9. Supports - cheers up, consoles, keeps up my spirits.

11 Conscience - consciousness Lost defence - lost my eyes by over-straining them in defending liberty. The reference is to his *Defensio Pro Populo Anglicano* which he wrote in reply to a pamphlet written by Salmisius, who condemned the execution of Charles I. Milton was warned that the prosecution of his task could lead to blindness, but he incurred the penalty.

12 Of side - which is talked of very highly throughout the length and breadth of Europe.

13 Lead me through - guide me, bear me up, sustain. Vain mask - the world is compared to a play which is transitory and hollow

11 Had .. guide - if I had no better guide

TO THE LORD GENERAL CROMWELL

(Page 137 of the Text)

1. Our men - chief of our men Cloud - a period of unpleasant experiences (opposed to 'sunny' - comfortable or pleasant)

2 Detractions - disparagements, depreciation That is at a time when rude attempts were made to minimise your reputation

3 Matchless fortitude - unequalled loftiness of mind and patience

4 Peace and truth - are in keeping with the ideas of war and 'detractions rude' Ploughed - struck out

5. **Crowned fortune**—alludes to Charles I *Of Gen. xlii, 8.*
 “Thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies”

6 **Reared God's trophies**—raised memorials of God's supreme power. Haspursued—have pursued truly religious work.

7. **Darwen**—a small stream flowing into the Ribble near Preston in Lancashire, where Cromwell defeated the Scots in 1648.
Imbrued—(lit soaked or moistened) strained

8 **Dunbar field**—Cromwell defeated the Scots in the battle of Dunbar in 1650. **Resounds**—re-echoes.

9. **Worcester's laureat wreath**—the battle of Worcester was fought in 1651 in which Cromwell was victorious **Laureat wreath**—a token of victory That is Cromwell won great honours in winning the battle of Worcester Yet still—nevertheless there is much yet to be conquered.

10-11. **Peace war**—if a statesman or general (like Cromwell) introduces some good reforms in civil affairs he can become as famous by his civil reforms as by his military achievements **New foes**—the allusion is to the Independents who were opposed to full spiritual independence

12 **Secular chains**—“the bonds of a state Church”

13 **Free conscience**—untainted conscience That is the freedom of thinking and doing according to the dictates of conscience.

14 **Hireling wolves**—these words are used contemptuously for these who had no spiritual ideal of their profession, but served the Church because they were paid for it **Whose . . . now—whose** aim in life is wholly and solely to obtain temporal benefits. **Maw—stomach**, worldly desires

OF THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEMONTE

1. **Saints**—i.e., people who worshipped according to the dictates of their conscience

3 **Kept thy Truth**—preserved their simplicity of worship; did not allow the ritual of the Catholic Church to creep into their mode of worship

4. When.. . stones—when our forefathers were nothing but idolatrous. Catholics were considered by Milton to be idolatrous

5. Book—*Cf.* *Psalms* xvi 8 "My tears, are they not in the book?" Their groans who—record the groans of them who

7 Slain—were killed Rolled . . . rocks—a contemporary history of the Massacre, written by Sir Samuel Moreland, records this sad event The mother died, but the child was found alive after three days.

9 Redoubled—re-echoed.

10 Their . . . sow—this alludes to the proverb that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church'. Milton prays that this Massacre may be instrumental, in spreading Protestantism over all the Italian fields, where Catholicism prevails

11. Doth sway—governs ; holds supreme authority

12. The triple tyrant—the Pope This is in allusion to the triple crown worn by the Pope as head of the Catholic Church That from these—in order that from the blood of these martyrs the number of Protestants may increase a hundredfold

13 Thy way—the righteous path · the true religion

14 Fly—flee from ; go away from Babylonian woe—the woe denounced against Babylon , Papacy. (See *Rev* xvii and xviii)

LINES FROM PARADISE REGAINED BOOK I (201-207)

(Page 19 of the Text)

201. No childish . . . pleasing—children are sportive and frolicsome by nature, but Jesus Christ was not like ordinary children He had no taste for any kind of play.

202 All set—My whole-hearted attention was directed towards studies Set—bent

203 To . . . know—to pick up knowledge by my own efforts as well as with the help of others

201 What .good -to promote the real happiness of all man-
kind Myself . truth—this is in allusion to John xvi. 37 when
Christ says to Pilate "Thou sayest that I am a King To this end
was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should
bear witness into the truth"

206 Above my years—much in advance of my age

207 The Lawsweet—this alludes to two verses of the Bible,
Psalms i 2, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his
law doth he meditate day and night," and Psalms cxix 103, "How
sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my
mouth!"

SAMSON AGONISTES LINES (1268-1291)

(Page 178 of the Text)

1268. Comely—beautiful, welcome Reviving—putting a new
life in people who have suffered for a long time on account of their
honest convictions.

1270 Deliverer—one who saves, refers to Cromwell When .
might—when God bestows invulnerable strength on a man who saves
people.

1272. Quell—utterly rout, crush, put down.

1273 Bolsterous—exhibiting tumultuous violence and fury.
rough, stormy

1274 Hardy—bold, full of assurance Industrious—unsparing
in their efforts

1275 Tyrannic—despotic; cruel, arbitrary Raging—acting
furiously, acting violently and tumultuously

1277 He—i.e., the deliverer Ammunition—a stock of missiles,
stores

1278. Feat (from Lat factum) that which is done. Defeat—to
undo Notice the jingle in this line

1279 With plain—simply with Magnitude of mind—large-
mindedness

1230. Celestial vigour—strength given by Heaven. Since he works for a noble cause, God gives him strength to fight out his way.

1231. Armouries—sometimes used as a collective noun signifying armour, here the places where arms are kept. Contemns—looks down upon; regards them as being insignificant.

1232. Winged expedition—flery speed *Cf.* Shakespeare. *Rich II*, IV, 3-51. "Then flery expedition be my wing."

1231,5 He executes .wicked—he inflicts a suitable punishment on the wicked for which God meant him.

1233. Distracted and amazed—utterly confused in agitation and confounded.

1233. Saints—holy man According to Percival's note, the Republican Independents called themselves 'Saints'.

1237 Tyranny or fortune—that is by their indomitable resolution and courageous endurance the saints overcome all the misfortunes to which they are subjected by tyrants etc

SAMSON AGONISTES (LINES 1745-1758)

(Pages 178 and 179 of the Text)

1745 Euripides frequently ends his plays with some such remarks as 'Inscrutable are the ways of God' Milton takes the sense of Christian philosophy and says "They are inscrutable indeed, but still all ways for the best" *Cf.* Pope, *Essay on Man*, "One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right" We . . . doubt—because we cannot understand the hidden significance of things

1746 Unsearchable dispose—inscrutable dispensation

1747 Brings about—what results it produces

1748. And . . . close—its ultimate results are invariably good

1749 To . face—as if He were displeased with us *Cf.* *Psalm* civ. 29, "Thou hidest thy face; they are troubled."

1751 In place—most editors take these words in the sense of ‘in this present place’, but Verity takes them to mean “by his presence”

1752 Gaza—the modern Guzzet, in S. W. Palestine, where Samson was imprisoned

1753 Bend—make a league

1754. Intent—the will or intention of God

1755 His servants—Manon, the father of Samson, and the chorus Acquist—acquisition.

1756 Passion—“strong agitation of the mind”

PARADISE LOST, V (894-897)

(Page 163 of the Text)

894 Faithless—those who sided with Satan, and revolted against God He—the seraph Abdiel

895 Unmoved—constant

896 Unshaken—unswerving in his faithfulness Useduced—not led astray Unterrified—dauntless These words are used to produce the effect of emphasis

897 Zeal—ardent earnestness to be true to God

PARADISE LOST, VII (25-28)

(Page 157 of the Text)

25 Fallen days—living in days of adversity, unfortunate times

26 Though—He can not feel lonely if the Muse daily favours him with the power of producing good poetry. Evil tongues—calumnious people, people who give the poet a bad name and talk very uncharitably of him

27 In darkness—surrounded by misfortunes, having an uncomfortable time Compassed—the poet is surrounded by dangers

28 Solitude—he is obliged to spend a lonely time.

PAR. LOST, XII (471-473)

(Page 155 of the Text)

- 471 And .. good—God will turn evil into good. *Cf. Tennyson,*
 "Oh yet we trust that somehow good, shall be the final goal of Ill."
 173 Light Darkness—which produced Cosmos out of
 Chaos

PAR. LOST. XII (552-587)

(P. 164 of the Text)

- 552 Last—for the last time
 553. Prediction—prophecy; foretelling Seer—prophet.
 554,555 "The time measured by the Archangel is that during
 which this world lasts; after that comes a measureless eternity."
 Abyss—the lowest depth.
 557 Instructed—having learned much of real importance
 558 Peace of thought—with a mind undisturbed by turbulent
 ideas. Fill of knowledge—satisfy myself by acquiring knowledge
 to my utmost capacity.
 559 What contain—as much as he is able to digest—as much
 knowledge as he can easily imbibe
 561. *Cf. 1 Samuel xv. 22, "Hath the Lord as great delight in
 burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord?
 Behold to obey is better than sacrifice."*
 562. *Cf. Psalms ii 11, "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice
 with trembling."*
 564. *Cf. 1 Peter, v 7, "Casting all your care upon him; for
 he careth for you."*
 565, 568 *Cf. Psalms, cxlv. 9. "The Lord is good to all, and his
 tender mercies are over all his work", Rom. xii 21, "Be not over-
 come of evil, but overcome evil with good, and 1 Cor, i. 27. "But God
 hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and
 God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things
 which are mighty."*

Subverting—confounding, overthrowing. Worldly .. . wise people possessing animal strength, and wise only so far as the affairs of this world are concerned; worldlings.

569,570 Real victory is of those who suffer with courageous endurance for the sake of truth

571 Death .. Life—it is worldly death only and is an introduction to spiritual life.

572. His — i e, Jesus Christ

573 Redeemer — (Lit one who purchases back) Saviour of the world, Jesus Christ

575 The sum - the sum-total

576-580 *Of 1 Corinthians, xiii 2, "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing"*

581-584. *Of 2, Peter: 5—, "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity"* To answerable—perform deeds according to your knowledge

585 The soul rest—the essence or staple of all the rest.

PAR LOST, X (910-14,937-44)

(P. 120 of the Text)

910 That flowing—incessant tears.

911 Disordered—dishevelled, scattered.

912. Humble—to show that she was sincerely a penitent.

913 Besought his peace—begged Adam to forgive her and be reconciled to her

937 Lowly plight—pity-exciting condition (plight is always used in a bad sense)

938 Immovable--constant Her . . commiseration--Adam was moved to pity at her sincerely penitent condition Eve was bent sincerely upon gaining peace of mind by confessing her fault and expressing how sorry she was for it

939 Relented--was moved to pity

941 His life so late--notice the absence of apostrophe and s His life's so late, etc

943 Reconciliation--reconciliation

944 At . lost--Adam forgot all his anger and was moved by feelings of love. Disarmed--he lost his anger he was armed before

PARADISE LOST, VIII (546-559)

(P. 143 of the Text)

546 Yet--in spite of the fact that woman is weak by nature and is superior to man

547 Loveliness--in external beauty Absolute--perfect

548 In complete--a model of perfection.

549. Wills--wishes, means to do

550 Virtuosest, discreetest--we should now say most virtuous and most discreet Discreet--possessed of discernment judicious

551 Higher--opposed to worldly Falls degraded--her beauty is so bewitching that it makes an ordinary mortal yield before her. Beauty is the sovereign conquering-weapon

552 Discourse--talk Wisdom (or a wise man) is sure to be dazzled by a beautiful face Loses--is defeated

553 Discourteened--abashed, ashamed Like-shows--shows itself like folly

555. As occasionally--God had from the first intended to create Eve. She was not created after Adam merely supplementally.

Of

"I, ere thou spak'st,
Know it not good for Man to be alone"

556 Consummate—make perfect, to give a finishing touch of perfection to all

558 Create an awe—awe inspired by her beauty and other traits She looks majestic in her sovereign beauty.

PAR: LOST, (IX 13-47)

(P. 152 of the Text)

13. Sad task—because he has to touch a tragic part of the story
Argument—subject

14-19. Milton refers to the subjects of the Iliad, Odyssey, and Aeneid The wrath of . Troy wall—Achilles was the king of the Myrmidons in Thessaly. He was brave and pitiless The Iliad begins with a quarrel between him and Agamemnon, the Commander-in-chief of the Greeks, as a result of which Achilles refuses to go to battle The Trojan prevail, and he sends Patrocles to oppose them. Patrocles is killed, and Achilles rushes into the battles and kills Hector, the Commander of the Trojans Achilles was killed before the capture of Troy. Rage of Turnusdispossessed—Lavinia was the daughter of Latinus king of the Laurentians, inhabitants of Latium She was betrothed to Turnus, king of the Rutuli. When Heneas landed in Italy Latinus opposed him, but afterwards formed an alliance with him by promising his daughter in marriage This brought on a war between Turnus and Heneas in which the latter was victorious Neptune's in, etc —Ulysses was persecuted by Neptune, and Aeneas by Juno

20 Answerable—which befits the subject chosen

21 Celestial Patroness—heavenly Muse, Uranus, that gives inspiration to the poet Deligns—condescends

22 Her .. .unimplored—who, without my begging her, inspires lofty ideas in my mind at night.

23, Slumbering—while I am sleeping. Inspires—(lit breathes into) puts a new breath into my verses, gives them grace and charm, renders them easy-flowing

24 Unpremeditated—not thought out before; extempore

25 Heroic song—epic poem.

27 Indite—write about; describe

29-31 Chief feigned—the standard of an epic poet's mastery was his ability to describe at full length (M. calls it tedious) the feats of gallantry of fabled knights 'in fabled' battles Dissect—to give a protractedly minute account, taking every aspect into consideration.

31-33 The better unsung—But the epic poets of old did not write on those real subjects in which they could show how patience was triumphant in the end and how people suffered martyrdom right courageously. Such subjects were worthy of an epic poem than their hitherto cherished subject

33, 34. Races and games—these are described in *Illiad*, and *Aeneid*. Tilting—is described by Spenser and by the Italian poets. Imblazoned—decked off in glaring colours

35 Impresses—the devices and emblems on the shield Sometimes they could not be properly understood, hence the word ' quaint ' Caparisons—ornamental coverings or harness of a horse

36 Bases—Base was a mantle worn by knights on horseback, hanging from the middle to the knees and sometimes lower. Tinsel showy

37 Joust—a mock combat on horseback between two knights Marshalled—arranged in order of rank

38 Sewers—the duty of a sewer was to place the dishes on the table and to taste them Seneschals—stewards

39. The skill—the result of the skill. Artifice—the subject of such heroic poems as referred to above is merely artificial, not true to fact

42 Nor . studious—Milton regards himself as neither possessing the ability to manufacture such poems, nor having the capacity of labouring at such subjects.

44 That name—the, of epic poetry

45. Damp—very much lessen the force of my resolve

46 All be mine—if I have to depend upon my own efforts wholly and solely.

47 Hers— of the Muse, Urania

PAR LOST, I, (1-26)

1-5 Like Homer and Virgil Milton describes the theme of his poem at the very beginning First disobedience - Adam was the first to sin. Forbidden tree - i.e., the tree of the knowledge of good and evil Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat its fruit, but they disobeyed Mortal—death Brought ~ death—human beings were made to suffer death in consequence of the disobedience of Adam and Eve Loss of Eden - As a result of their sin Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden of Eden. Greater Man—the Messiah, who by his death on the cross atoned for the sin of Adam and regained Paradise for mankind. Cf Rom v. 19 "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" Regain - for mankind. The blissful seat—Paradise "Lines 4 and 5 are incumbrances and deadeners of the harmony, as are lines 14-16 (Landor, quoted by Browne).

6. Sing .. Muse - Milton follows the practice of Homer who in the opening lines of his epics asks for inspiration from the Muse Heavenly Muse—Urania Secret—separate, apart, retired; when Moses went on the top of Sinai to receive God's commandments he was alone

7. Oreb, or of Sinai—Horeb and Sinai are two peaks of the same mountain on which Moses received inspiration from God. The Law is said in Deut—to have been given from Horeb Cf Exodus iii 1, "I came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb," and XIX 20, "And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai "

8. That shepherd—Moses, who "kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law" on Horeb (Ex iii 1) The chosen seed—the Israelites Seed—people

9, 10. How chaos—Cf Gen 1 1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The first five books of the Bible, which

include Genesis, are believed to have been written by Moses. Chaos—"The wasteful Deep", state of disorder, Sion Hill—Sion was the hill opposite to Moriah on which the Temple of Jerusalem was built. David, the Israelite king, and poet, lived in Jerusalem.

11. Silva's brook—was a pool intermittently flowing near the Temple of Jerusalem. It is mentioned by Isaiah. In mentioning the three greatest names in Hebrew literature Milton appears to offer some justification for invoking the Muse.

12. Fast by—close to. The oracle of God—the temple of God in Jerusalem.

14. With flight—i.e., "he will ascend to the highest Empyrean"; the subject is a sublime one. Middle—mediocre, mean. No middle flight—the figure of speech here is Litotes.

15. The Aonian mount—Mount Helicon in Boetia, sacred to the Muses. Milton hopes to be filled with a higher inspiration because he means to write on a greater theme than that chosen by the classical poets. Pursues—treats of.

16. Milton is not right in his assertion here for many writers had treated the subject of the overthrow of Satan and the fall of man in prose and poetry—e.g., Andreini, Vondel. Rhyme—verse; poetry.

17. Thou, O Spirit!—the Holy Spirit. Milton believed that he was an inspired man.

18. Before all temples—*Of*. 1 Cor. iii 16, "Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away."

19. From the first—i.e., from the beginning of the world. *Of*. Gen. i. 2, "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

21. Dove-like—Verity thinks that the allusion is to the descent of the Holy Ghost "in a bodily shape like a dove at the baptism of Christ." Brooding—moving; furthering. *Of* Gen. i. 2, "And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." The word suggests the idea of a bird hatching eggs. Abyss—Chaos.

22. Madest it pregnant—i.e., produced the vegetable world etc.

24 Hight—height I may keep up the sublimity of this great subject Argument—subject

25 Assert—vindicate Eternal Providence—the eternal foresight and wisdom with which God governs the world.

26 And . . man—and indicate that God's dealings with mankind are just Pope borrowed this line with a slight alteration *Of*.

“ Laugh when we must, be candid where we can
But vindicate the ways of God to man ”

PAR. LOST, III (1-55)

(P. 133 of the Text)

1. Heaven's first-born - Sylvester invokes light as “ God's oldest daughter ” Heaven—God

2 Or . . beam—or call thee God's coeternal beam Coeternal—equally eternal

3 Unblamed—without giving any offence God is light—*Of* 1 John 1 5, “ God is light,” and 1 Tim. vi 16, “ who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto ”.

6 Bright . . increate—wisdom is said to be “ pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty, the brightness of the everlasting light ” Milton here adopts the opinion that light was never created because it is eternal

7 Hearst Thou—(a Latinism) art thou called Ethereal—Empyrean

8 Whose . . tell ?—whose fountain is not known to any body. *Of* Job xxxviii 19, “ Where is the way where light dwelleth ? ”

Before the sun—According to Genesis light was brought into the world before the sun

9 Heavens—of this world as distinguished from the “ Empyrean ” where God dwelt before the creation of the world

9, 10 At .. God—in obedience to God's command *Of* Gen 1, 3, “ And God said, let there be light, and there was light ” Invest—cover

11. World of waters—the world, when first created, was only a "fluid mass."

12. Vold . . . Infinite—"Before the creation of the world the Universe consisted of Heaven and Hell with Chaos between them. In order to find room for the new world a large space of territory had to be abstracted from the dominion of Chaos." Infinite—is used as a noun here.

14 Escaped . . . Pool—for 'Stygian Pool' see note on *L'Allegro*—3. Satan and his followers were thrown in the "fiery gulf" of Hell after their unsuccessful rebellion. Milton writes as if he himself had been present in the scenes described in the preceding books about Hell and Satan's voyage from Hell to the world.

15. Obscure sojourn—unknown place. Sojourn is a place where one remains temporarily. Flight—the elevation of my song.

16 Utter—outer, the outside darkness of Hell. Middle darkness—the great gulf between Hell and Heaven, darkness of Chaos.

17. Other . . . lyre—Milton's notes are different from those of Orpheus although the subject is the same. The allusion is to the Hymn to Night attributed to Orpheus, who was a Greek poet and Musician according to Greek mythology. Calliope inspired her son Orpheus, while Milton owed his inspiration to the Heavenly Muse.

19 The . . . Muse—Milton gives his muse the name of Urania.

21. Though . . . rare—though the task of reascending is difficult, and it is seldom done. Thee . . . revisit—after describing the darkness of Hell and Chaos Milton describes the light of the upper world.

22 Feel—because he was deprived of eyesight. Sovran—(It: Sovrano) sovereign. Vital lamp—life-giving lamp, the sun.

22 Revisitest eyes—Milton was totally blind in his forty-fourth year.

25, 26 So . . . veiled—the allusion is to two kinds of blindness arising from *gutta serena* and *suffusio*. "Drop Serene" is a literal translation of *gutta serena*, a disease of the optic nerve. Suffusion—

cataract. The poet does not decide to which of these two his blindness was due Yet...more, etc.—nevertheless I still wonder. My blindness does not stand in my way to write poetry.

29 Sacred song religious poetry

30 Brooks—Kedron and Silon

32. Nightly I visit—Milton goes in imagination to the brooks of Sion to meet the Heavenly Muse at night

33. Those other two—"Milton had first intended merely to mention two blind poets, Thamyras and Maeonides, and added Tiresias and Phineus, two blind prophets, as an afterthought. Equalled fate—they also were blind.

34. So were I—I wish I were as renowned as they.

35 Thamyras—a Thracian poet He challenged the Muses to a singing contest, and was deprived by them of sight, voice, and skill in music Maeonides—Homer, the son of Macon He was a native of Maeonia, a name of ancient Lydia

36. Tiresias and Phineus—were two blind prophets according to the Greek mythology. Prophets—they were poets also

37. Feed—ruminate. Voluntary—of their accord Cf Pope
"I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came"

38 Numbers—poetry The wakeful bird—nightingale

39. Darkling—in the dark

40. Nocturnal note—nightly song

43. Vernal—pertaining to the spring.

44. Human fact divine—the Bible says that God created man in His own image

45. Ever-during—ever-enduring, perpetual, constant.

46 For—instead of The book of knowledge—the books of nature.

49. Expunged and rased—"as from a waxen tablet, by the use of the blunt end of the stylus"

52 Her—refers to the 'mind', which is made feminine because the Latin *mens* is feminine.

53, 54 All . . disperse—remove all darkness from my mind so that I may be able to know those things which ordinary mortals cannot.

55 Things invisible—i.e., Heaven and Hell and their inhabitants.

PAR REGAINED (236-284)

(P. 172 of the Text)

236 Specular—affording view.

240. Eye of Greece—"the Spartans when urged to destroy Athens, refused to put out one of the two eyes of Greece"

241 Native . . wits—where learned people of world-wide renown were born.

242 Recess--retreat

243 Studious—devoted to learning

244 Olive-grove of Academe—Academe, called after Academus, was the favourite resort of Plato. "Though the sacred olives grew there, it is incorrect to term it an olive-grove, as the olive is little suited to form groves such as contemplation would have"

245 The Attic bird—the nightingale Colonus, which was near the Academy, was, according to Sophocles the haunt of nightingales.

246 Thick-warbled—Notes having a deep melody, very attractive notes

247 Hymettus—was famous for its honey.

249 Studious musing—learned meditations, Ilissus—it rises on the north slope of Hymettus and is lost in the marshes of the Athenian plain.

253 Lyceum—was the name of a gymnasium at Athens It was frequented by Aristotle and his followers Stoa—was the painted portico set off with pictures of Marathon, by Polygnotus, where Zeno conversed with his disciples, the Stoics

257. Æolian charms—lyrical songs Lyrical poetry was called Æolian because Alcaeus and Sappho, two of the greatest lyric poets

were natives of Mitylene in Lesbos, and wrote on the Æolic dialect. Dorian lyric odes—the poems of Pindar are meant here

259 Melesigenes—Homer, called Melesigenes because he was born near the river Meles. When he became blind and settled at Cumæ he was called Homer by which term the Cumæans distinguished blind persons.

262 Iambic—the tragedies were mostly written in Iambic measure

264. Sententious—pithy ; pregnant with meaning.

266 High actions—e.g., the fall of Troy High Passions—as in Hippolytus

270 Shook arsenal—"None of the commentators can explain this phrase" (Browne) Fulminated—thundered

271 Macedon—in the Philippics of Demosthenes Artaxerxes King of Persia (465-425 B C)

272,273 From . . . Socrates—"Cicero praises Socrates for having brought philosophy down from heaven to dwell in cities and even in houses" Tenement—a small house

277 Mellifluous—flowing as with honey, flowing sweetly and smoothly

278 Old and new—"the three phases of Academic philosophy were the old, under Plato, the middle under Arcesilas, and the new, under Carneades."

279 Peripatetics—Aristotelians, (lit walking about). Aristotle taught his pupils while walking in the Lyceum at Athens so his followers were styled *Peripatetics*

280 Epicurean—followers of Epicurus, a Greek philosopher, who has been erroneously regarded as teaching a doctrine of refined voluptuousness Stoic—A party of philosophers in Greece which held that man should be free from passion, and unmoved by joy or grief

281. Revolve—consider repeatedly in you mind

282 Till weight—till time makes you fit to assume charge of a kingdom successfully

283. These complete—the allusion is to the Stoic paradox that a wise man is always a king

NATIVITY ODE

(Page 25 of the Text)

- 1 This morn—i.e., 25th December (1629)
- 2 Wherein—on which Son ...king—Jesus Christ
3. Wedded ..mother—i.e., the Virgin Mary.
- 4 Redemption—ransom (salvation).
5. Holy Sages—the Hebrew prophets, the old Testament writers
- 6 Deadly forfeit—the penalty of death 'Forfeit' signifies the penalty of misdoing, and hence the penalty itself (due to sin) Release—cancel; secure the remission of
7. Work—produce; bring about
- 8 Unsufferable—insufferable
- 10 Wont—used; was wont
11. The midst—in the midst Trinal Unity—consisting of God, Christ, and the Holy Ghost
- 12 To be—in order to be
- 14 Darksome house—the body is the prison of the soul. Mortal clay—Locke calls the body "the clay cottage"
15. Milton follows the manner of the classical poets in invoking the Muse Heavenly Muse—the Muse of Hebrew poetry Vein—mood; humour, strain
- 16 Afford—present; give Infant God—Christ
- 17 Strain—lit squeeze, stretch here utterance
- 18 Sun's team—the horses of the sun
- 19 Took—taken Print—footprint.
- 21 Spangled hosts—stars
- 23 Star-led wizards—the reference is to the wise men who came from the east of Jerusalem to worship Christ when he was born. They were guided by a star in the east Wizards—wise men.
- 24 Prevent—anticipate; forestall, go before them

26 Have greet—i.e., have the honour of greeting him first

27 The Angel quire—refers to St Luke ii, 13, 14.

28 Secret altar—the allusion is to Isaiah vi 6, 7. Secret—set apart ; retired

31 Meanly wrapt—the swaddling clothes were poor and coarse.

32 In . him—i.e., standing in awe of him.

33 Doffed—put off ; doff=do off Gaudy trim—holiday dress

34 So—thereby, in that way.

35 It her—it was out of place for her.

36 Lusty—strong, handsome Paramour—lover (now used in a bad sense)

37 Fair—flattering

38 Woos—asks

41 Pollute—polluted Blame—crime

42 Maiden white—blameless or unsullied purity.

44 So near—so closely, at no great distance

45 Cease—to cause to cease

46 Meek-eyed Peace—the use of such personified abstractions is characteristic of Milton's early style

47. Olive green—the olive was the symbol of peace.

48 The turning sphere—spheres turning round the earth The allusion is to the old cosmology according to which the earth was the centre of the universe which consisted of a series of concentric spheres.

49 Harbinger—precursor, forerunner Here used in its radical sense of the officer who goes in advance to procure a lodging or harbour for his master

50 Turtle wing—i.e., the wings of the turtle-dove The turtle-dove is a type of faithful love

51 Waving—stretching Myrtle—the emblem of peace and supreme command.

52 Strikes—as if with an enchanter's rod ; causes by striking, produces suddenly.

55. The idle hung—Milton introduces here a custom of chivalry into classical times. Cf. the mixture of classical mythology and Christianity in *Lycidas*

56 Hooked chariot—the wheels or axle-trees of the Roman chariots were fitted with hooks

59, 60 Notice the perfect simplicity of style in these lines.
Awful—awe-struck, filled with awe Sovran—sovereign

62 Prince of Light—i.e., Christ.

64 Whist—hushed; whisted; were silenced

65 Smoothly kissed—blew gently over the waters; touched the waters silently, did not blow tempestuously.

66 Ocean—is trisyllabic (o-ce-an)

67. Who—the fig here is Pathetic Fallacy An inanimate object is represented as an animate object Forgotten—forgotten

68 Birds of calm—the halcyons. Milton alludes to the fable "that during the seven days before, and as many days after, the shortest day of the year while the bird halcyon was breeding, there always prevailed calms at sea." In classical mythology Halcyone was the daughter of Aeolus and wife of Ceyx. She and her husband, having called themselves Hera and Zeus were for their presumption metamorphosed into king-fishers. Brooding—Cf. *L'Allegro*, 6
Charmed wave—i.e., laid under a charm or spell

69 Amaze—amazement

70 Stedfast—constant.

71 Influence—(lit a flowing in) the power exercised by celestial bodies upon the earth, and upon men's lives, fortunes etc One way—i.e., the birthplace of Christ

73 For all—notwithstanding, in spite of

74. Lucifer—the planet Venus, which rises first and sets last of all

75. Orbs—orbis, or, it may denote the stars themselves

76 Bespoke—spoke authoritatively Bld—bade

78 Had . . . room—had given place to day 'Her' refers to gloom.

81. As—as if.

84. Burning axle-tree—the ‘glowing axle’ of the chariot of the sun Axle-tree—“the fixed bar on the rounded ends of which the wheels of a carriage revolve”

85. Shepherds—*Cf.* Luke 11, 8, “and there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field” Lawn—open space between woods, pasture

86. Or e’er—before ever,

87. Rustic row—the fig, is Hypallage

89. Pan—i.e., Christ. According to Greek mythology Pan was the god of shepherds and flocks Christ is spoken of in the Bible as the Good shepherd (John 10, 2, Heb xiii, 20)

90. Was—had

92. Silly—harmless or simple

93. Sweet—heavenly, divine

95. Struck—produced.

96. Divinely-warbled—either divinely warbling or made to warble divinely

97. Stringed noise—the music of the stringed instrument; the music of the heavenly harps ‘Noise’ was formerly used for a band of music, here it is equivalent to music

98. As—such as. Took—captivated, charmed

99. ‘Loth—unwilling, reluctant

100. Prolongs—keeps up for a long time Close—the cadence at the end of a piece of music

102,3 Hollow seat—“Either implying that the Moon is a hollow shell or that the sound fills the vault of heaven in which the Moon is placed” Round—sphere Cynthia—twin-sister of Apollo, goddess of the moon Aery region—atmosphere Thrilling—warbling, piercing

104. Won—persuaded

106. Its—this word occurs only thrice in Milton’s poetry—here and twice in *Paradise Lost* Last—final

107,108 Perhaps Milton alludes to the idea that the music of the spheres directs the revolutions of the Universe aright Alone—by

itself ; without Nature's help Happier' union—than that of Nature.

109 Surrounds—(lit to overflow) encompasses Their sight—them seeing

110 Globe . . light—a circular globe of light Globe—a compact body.

111 Shamefaced—firm in modesty Arrayed—clothed

112 Helmed—helmeted Cherubim—in the Bible the word is applied to, (i) the winged images used in connection with the mercy seat of the Jewish Ark and Temple , (ii) the guardians of the Tree of Life : (iii) the mysterious composite beings, the winged footstool and chariot of the Almighty

113 Seraphim—(' the burning one's) celestial beings having three pairs of wings. The special attribute of the Seraphim was ardent love.

114 Displayed—spread out

116 Unexpressive—inexpressible.

119. Sons of Morning—*Cf* " When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy " (Job, xxxviii 7). Sons of Morning—is from Isaiah xiv. 12, " How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning " , Sung—sang.

122 Hinges—that upon which something hangs , supports

123 Cast—firmly laid

124 Weltering—rolling , tossing Oozy—from ooze=soft mud at the bottom of water or on the surface of land whence the water has been drained.

125 Crystal Spheres—Milton refers (1) to the Ptolemaic system of astronomy developed by Plato, Aristotle, Ptolemy, etc and (2) to the Pythagorean doctrine of the music of the spheres (1) According to the Ptolemaic system of astronomy the earth was the centre of the universe, and the central earth was enclosed at different distances by eight successive spheres of space which were transparent (crystal) Plato recognised only eight of such spheres, but afterwards the number was increased by two, (2) Pythagoras supposed that the spheres

emitted sounds, when they moved, proportional to their respective distances from the earth, thus forming a celestial concert which could not be heard by mankind. Plato believed that this harmony was produced by the Sirens Crystal—the ninth sphere was called the *Crystalline*

126 Human ears—the heavenly harmony is inaudible to man's gross ears

127 Touch—affect

128 Silver chime—harmony of sounds, musical harmony.

130 Deep—most musical rich in harmony.

131 Ninefold harmony—Milton allows nine spheres.

132 Consort—accompaniment, union, harmonious agreement
Angelic symphony—the notes of the Cherubim and Seraphim.

136 Age of Gold—the fabled reign of Saturn, a time of peace and golden prosperity

136 Speckled—corrupt, spotted, showy; flaunting

138 Mould—material

140 Dolorous—ghastly, gloomy Peering—coming into sight

112 Return—the allusion is to the legend of Astraea, the goddess of Justice, who left the world with her sister Pudicitia (Purity) when the golden age passed away

143 Orbed—encircled or surrounded by a double rainbow (Rainbow is only semicircular in appearance) Like glories—i.e., similar to the glorious tints of the rainbow

145 Celestial sheen—heavenly brightness

146 Tissued—massed together, variegated, interwoven. Steering—moving.

148 The gates—the everlasting gates.

150 Yet—as yet.

153 Must—is destined to Loss—what we have lost.

155 Ychained—chained (p p). Sleep—viz., of death.

156 Wakeful—awakening Trump—trumpet.

158 As . . . rang—the references are to the giving of the Mosaic law

159, 160 Brake—broke Aghast—was terrified

162 Centre—of the earth or the earth itself as being the centre of the universe

163 Session—judgment, properly "the sitting of a court of justice"

164 Spread—display, expand

167 But now—and only now

168 Old Dragon—Satan "(An angel) laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years (Rev x 2),

169 Straiter—narrower, stricter

170. Casts—the metaphor of casting a net

171. Wroth—angry, wrathful

172 Swinges—beats or dashes about violently

"Stanzas xix and xx of this Ode are founded on a tradition that at the time of the Passion (the time is here changed to the Nativity), the pilot of a ship sailing from Italy to Cyprus was bidden by a supernatural voice to proclaim, when he came to a certain island, that Pan was dead. On arriving at the place named, the ship was suddenly becalmed, until he cried out that Pan was dead, where-withal was heard such piteous outcries and dreadful shrieking, as hath not been the like"

173 "The idea, from this point to line 236, is that of the sudden paralysis of the gods and enchantments of the Pagan religions at the birth of Christ" (Masson) Are dumb—have ceased to prophesy. Oracles—"is a term applied to the utterances or responses of a deity, to the deity responding, or to the place where the response is uttered"

174. Hideous hum—"Comp Virgil's account of the cave of the Cumaean Sibyl when Aeneas went to consult her before descending into the lower world (*Aen vi*, 42-100), when inspired by the god Apollo she "from her cell shrills forth awful mysteries and booms again from the cavern, robing her truth in darkness."

175. Deceiving—deceitful, ambiguous. It was believed in the middle ages that all oracular responses came from the Devil.

176 The most famous oracles of ancient times were those of Apollo at, Delphi, Abdera etc.

177 Divine—utter prophecies or cause them to be uttered

178 Hollow—ghostlike Delphos—Delphi, small town in Phocæ, situated on Mt Parnassus in Greece The great oracle of Apollo was here

179 Nightly—nocturnal Trance—state of ecstasy Breathed spell—spell due to the exhalations from beneath the tripod on which the priestess who uttered oracular prophecies, sat.

180 Cell—"the cella was the most important part of a temple, where the statue of the deity was placed, and mysteries were revealed Thence oracles were given It was only accessible to the priests and to the initiated. From the cave beneath the centre of the temple of Apollo at Delphi rose an intoxicating vapour. Over the chasm was placed a tripod, on which sat the Pythia to wait for the inspiration conveyed in the ascending fumes"

183 Compare the language of *Isaiah* lxx. 10," and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her "and *St. Matt* ii. 18, "In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning

185 Poplar pale—silver poplar.

186 Parting—departing Genius—according to the classical belief every person and place had a guardian spirit

188 Nymphs—the nymphs of the forests and groves

119 Consecrated—devoted, set apart. Consecrated earth—graves

191 The Lars and Lemures—the Lars (the spirits of good men) were Roman gods of the household, whose principal sphere was the fireplace. The Lemures were the spirits of wicked men They were supposed to wander at night and trouble the living, Line 189 refers to them, and line 190 to the Lars

192. Urns—perhaps tombs

194 Flamens—Roman priests devoted to the service of a particular deity, here priests in general Quaint—precise; familiar; ceremonious

196 Peculiar—special Forgoes—gives up; abandons

127 Baalim—were Phœnician deities and *Peor* was one of them. *Peor* i.e., Baal-Peor was one of the titles under which Baal, God of the sun, was worshipped by the Phœnicians

199. Twice-battered god—Dagon the god of the Philistines Milton refers here to Dagon's twice falling before the ark of God (1 *Sams*, v. 3).

200 Mooned Ashtarothe—Ashtarothe was goddess of the Phœnicians She was identical with the Syrian Aphrodite She loved Adonis (Thammuz), the son of a Syrian king, and married him He died but was revived for six months of every year, & symbol of the revival of nature in summer Ashtarothe was symbolised by either the Venus or the Moon, hence the epithet *moon*ed

201 Heavens . . both—so called in *Jerem*, xlv 25, "to burn incense to the queen of heaven.

202 Taper's .. shine—i.e., on her altars Shine—lustre

203 Lybie Hammon—the god Amun. He was an Egyptian deity and protector of flocks He was represented with the horns of a ram, which were symbolic of his power The seats of his worship were Thebes, Ethiopia and the Libyan desert

204 Thammuz (the Adonis of Greek mythology) was killed by a boar. There were annual festivals at Byblos in Phœnicia in honour of Thammuz at the time of the year when the waters of the Adonis became red—a phenomenon which led people to suppose that his blood was flowing afresh. Women took the chief part in the festivals They mourned the death of Thammuz and rejoiced over his revival (Vide—note on line 200) Tyrian—Phœnician

205. Moloch—a Canaanitish sun-god whose worship was accompanied by human sacrifices.

207 Burning idol—As pointed out by Warton, Sandys in his *Travels*, says of the valley of Tophet, "Therein the Hebrews sacrificed their children to Moloch an idol of brass, having the head of a calf, the rest of a kingly figure with arms extended to receive the miserable sacrifice scared to death with his burning embracements For the idol was hollow within, and filled with fire; and lest their

lamentable shrieks should s^d the heart of their parents, the priests of Moloch did deaf their ears with the continual clang of trumpets and timbrels"

208 Cymbals ring—the clash of the cymbals (a musical instrument) in which the cries of the victims were drowned

209 They—the priests and worshippers Grisly—horrible.

211 Brutish—"The religion of the Egyptians consisted in a pantheistic worship of nature that mainly took for its symbols living animals"—e.g., the Memphian bull, Apis, was sacred to Osiris

212. Isis—goddess of the earth, and wife of Osiris Her statue had "the form of woman but with horns like a cow" In the public processions those instructed in her mysteries wore masks representing dog's heads Orus—or Horus was the Egyptian Sun god He and Anubis were the children of Osiris and Isis Orus was also the god of silence and mystery. He was represented as "hawk-headed" Anubis—was the dog god of the Egyptians, who conducted souls to the lower-world and weighed their actions before Osiris He was represented with jackal's head

213 Osiris—was the Nile god. He is said to have been king of Egypt On his return from travels in foreign land, he was murdered by his brother Typhon, who cut his body in pieces and threw them into the Nile But Isis discovered the fragments, defeated Typhon with the aid of her son, and recovered his sovereignty. Apis, the sacred Bull, was the symbol under which Osiris was worshipped

214. Memphian grove—Memphis in Egypt contained the temple of Apis, the bull-god

215 Unshowered—in allusion to the lack of rain in Egypt, which is fertilised by the over flowing of the Nile

217 Chest—the ark Apis was in the form of a bull, not Osiris The chest belongs to the latter

218. Shroud—(funeral garment) shelter.

219. Timbrelled anthems—anthems (sacred or religious songs) sung to the accompaniment of the timbrel (a small drum)

220. Sable-stoled—dressed in black.

221 Compare *St Matt* ii 6 "And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel," and *Isa* xix 1, "Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and cometh unto Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall meet in the midst of it"

223 Ey'n eyes

224 Beside—besides

225 Abide—stay, live

226 Typhon—the Egyptian god was a brother of Osiris He is represented sometimes as a hundred-headed monster, sometimes as a crocodile (See note on l 213)

227-28 "The allusion is explained by the story of the infant Hercules strangling, in his cradle, the two serpents sent by Hera to destroy him" Swaddling bands—the clothes in which a babe is 'wrapt' Crew—company, number

229 So—in the same manner In bed—i.e., when it is about to set

230 Beneath the red clouds Cloudy red—the red colour of clouds or red clouds This is true of a sunset

231 Pillows—rests, makes its pillow of an orient wave Orient—(lit eastern) bright, shining.

232-234 The reference is to the superstitious belief that evil spirits donot stir abroad after sunrise Flocking shadows—troops or large numbers of ghosts Infernal jail—hell Fettered—chained

Several—particular, separate, respective

235 Fays—fairies (lit elves)

236 Night-steeds—that draw the chariot of the night Moon-loved maze—i.e., the intricacies of the moon-light dance Lines 167-236—The poet says that the advent of Christ has caused Satan to be bound and has put an end to all the pagan beliefs, in oracular divinations, and the mythological gods—e.g., those of Greece, Rome, Syria, etc

239 Time is—it is time that Tedious—lengthy.

240 Youngest-teemed --latest-born, &c, the star which appeared at the time of Christ's birth.

241. Fixed—the star remained fixed over the spot where Christ was born at Bethlehem. Polished—shining, bright

242 *Of*, the parable of the Ten Virgins in *St Matt xxv*.

243. Courtly stable—the stable where the Eastern Kings did homage to Christ

244. Bright-harnessed—clad in bright or shining armour. Serviceable—ready for service

ANALYSIS OF THE POEM

I Introduction.

1. Occasion of the poem,

(a) Time and Purpose of the Nativity lines . . . 1—7

(b) The manner of it . . . 8—14

2 Poet's address to his Muse

The wise men of the East come to worship Christ,
angels praise him, and hast thou no offering? .. 15 28

II. The Hymn.

1 Guilty Nature fears his coming . . . 29—44

2. But Peace is his harbinger .. 45—52

(a) Wars have ceased . . . 53—60

(b) The winds and waters are at rest . . . 61—68

(c) The stars are fixed "with deep amaze," . . . 69—76

(d) The sun withholds "his wonted speed," . . . 77—84

(e) The shepherds sit "simply chatting," . . . 85—92

3 Heavenly Music announces him,

(a) The music described .. 93—100

(b) Its effects on Nature . . . 101—108

(c) Its accompaniments .. 109—116

(d) Such music never before heard, except at the
Creation of the Universe .. 117—124

(There is here a skilful transition from the heavenly music to the thought of "the music of the spheres")

4. What would follow if "the Music of the Spheres" could be heard now . . . 125—148
 - (a) The Age of Gold would return ,
 - (b) Vanity would die.
 - (c) Sin would melt away
 - (d) Hell itself would pass away
- 5 Why this is at present impossible :
 - (a) Christ must die on the Cross .. 149—154
 - (b) The trump of doom must sound . . . 155—162
 - (c) The last judgment must be held, when our bliss will be perfect 163—166
6. What has actually occurred :
 - (a) The old Dragon is bound . 167—172
 - (b) The heathen Oracles are dumb, and the gods , routed, like ghosts at sunrise —
 - i Those of Greece and Rome .. 173—196
 - ii Those of Syria . 197—210
 - iii Those of Egypt .. . 211—236
 - (c) The Heavenly Babe sleeps attended by angels . 237—244

—Bell.

COMUS

(Page 62 of the Text)

Discovers—displays Wild wood—with probably a mountain in the background Attendent spirit—acted by Lawes, serves a two fold purpose : (1) Ethical—he is the supernatural guardian of the lady and her brothers, and is a symbol of the Divine help that virtue receives in its struggle against temptation , (2) Dramatic—in the prologue he serves the purpose of the Chorus in Greek plays by explaining matters and indicating the development of the plot

1. Starry . court—the starry sky close to the habitation of the king of the gods (the Lord of Heaven) , on the borders of Heaven

2 Where in which, Shapes—Milton's spirits are etherialised matter

3 Aerial spirits - spirits living in the air Inspired--with-
in their assigned sphere The reference is to the ptolemaic system
of astronomy according to which the movements of the stars were
explained by a theory of eight concentric crystal spheres (vide note
on Not Ode)

4 Calm and serene - Peaceful and bright antithetical to
stir and "smoke" (5) Dim spot. - the earth is a dim spot from
the point of view of a spirit looking down from heaven

6 Low - thoughted care - anxiety about the material interests
of life anxiety about mean objects

7 Pestered - (Originally means crowded or obstructed) fasten-
ed) Pinfold - an enclosure or pound for cattle

9 Crown - Glory or the reward of a good life

10 Mortal change - death It means either (1) the change
from this mortal life or (2) "The change which occurs to all human
beings."

11 Enthroned gods - Cf "And upon the thrones I saw four and
twenty elders sitting arrayed in white garments, and on their heads
crowns of gold" (Rev. iv. 4) Sainted - Holy

12 Due steps - by necessary and legitimate means

13 Lay their just hands - Lay their hands justly. Golden key
- Symbolises eternal life St Peter, the gate-keeper at Heaven was
said to possess two keys of which "The golden opens, the iron shuts
again" (Compare Matt. xvi. 19)

15 But far - If it were not far

16 Ambrosial weeds - heavenly garments, 'sky robes', am-
brosia was the food of the gods, weeds is now used only in the sense
of widow's mourning

17 Rank - corrupt Sin - worn mould - sin-corrupted earth

18 But, task - but I must explain what I am here for i.e.,
begin my task Neptune vide notes in *L'Alleg* and *Il Pen*

19 Each - every.

20 Took ..Jove on the dethronement of Saturn, the old king of the gods in Greek mythology, his three sons Jupiter, Neptune and Pluto shared the empire of the universe. Jupiter took the sky, Pluto took the subterranean regions of the dead, and Neptune took the sea. Took in by lot—received as his share. High . Jove—Jupiter and Pluto

23 Unadorned—naked, the sea would be bare without the islands.

24. Grace—to show favour. Tributary gods—smaller deities under his sway, i.e., owing him tribute

25 By course—"in regular distribution" Commits .. government—assigns a separate government to each inferior god

26 Sapphire—a precious stone of a deep blue colour. Sapphire is the colour for gods of the blue sea

27 Little—because these deities were viceroys of Neptune. Trident—was the symbol of Neptune's authority. Trident—a three-pronged spear. This Isle—Great Britain

28 Main—ocean

29 Quarters—apportions. Blue hair deities—the water nymphs like the Nereides)

30 Fronts sun—looks towards the west, faces the west, i.e., Wales

31 A noble peer—the earl of Bridgewater. Mickle—great, much

32 Tempered awe sternness moderated by a conciliatory spirit and tact

33 An old nation—The Welsh are called Old because they were descendants of the Celtic Britons who conquered Britain about 500 B. C.

34 His fair offspring—Alice the youngest daughter who acted as *The Lady*, John Viscount Brackley (the elder Brother), and Thomas Egerton (the Second Brother). Nursed lore "Brought up like princes"

35. Their fathers's state The ceremony of his being installed at Ludlow castle, his official residence.

36 New intrusted sceptre—newly conferred authority.

37. Perplexed—entangled ; intervoven ; mazy

38 Nodding—overhanging, hence awe-inspiring Horror—literally shagginess Here may mean both (a) the rough bristling trees, (b) the feelings of fear and dread they inspire. Shady—bushes overhanging the paths like projecting eyebrows

39. Threats—threatens. Forlorn—lost.

41 But that—" unless I had been despatched "

45. Why—I was despatched. In hall or bower—in the company of men and women in banquet room or private apartment.

46. Bacchus—the god of wine Note as in *L'Alleg* and *Il Pen* Milton invents his own mythology He represents Comus as the offspring of Bacchus and Circe and thereby typifies the union of sensual pleasure and enchantment

48 After the... transformed—(a Latinism) after the transformation of the Tuscan mariners The reference is to a story in which Bacchus is said to have hired a ship belonging to Tyrrhenian pirates to carry him to Nasos The pirates, however, steered towards Asia to sell him there as a slave, so he changed the masts and oars into serpents and the sailors into dolphins

49 As the winds listed—as the winds pleased or liked.

50 Circe's Island—the small island Aeaea, off the coast of Latium Circe, a powerful enchantress, was the daughter of Apollo and the ocean nymph Perse

51 Charmed cup—' Wine rendered magical by means of incantation '

52 Lost .. shape—Circe turned men and women into swine in outward form though they retained their human mind

53 Grovelling—mean

55 Ivy berries—the ivy was sacred to Bacchus.

57 But his mother more—but more like his mother. The emphasis is on the enchanting aspect of sensual pleasure

58 Comus -(literally revel or merry making) Milton's Comus represents sensual pleasure as well as the misuse of the intellect on behalf of falsehood and impurity

59 Ripe and frolic—mature and frolicsome Full grown age—well developed manhood

60. Celtic-fields—France and Spain

61 Ominous—full of omens or magical appearances

62 Quench .. Phoebus—slake the thirst caused by the heat of the sun Phoebus Appollo, the sun-god.

67 Fond—in its lit sense, foolish, Intemperate, uncontrolled

68 Soon .. . works—as soon as the drink produces its effect

69 Express -exact Express gods—the allusion is to Gen 126, "So God created man in his own image"

72 All ..were—the victims of Circe lost their human appearance but retained their human intelligence.

77. Sensual sty—mire of debauchery—like swine

80 Glancing star - shooting star

81. Convoy—escort

83 Spun woof—made of material dyed in rainbow tints, Iris was the goddess of the rainbow

84 Swain -countryman, shepherd

85. These words are significant inasmuch as they not only refer to the fact that Laves acted the part of the attendant spirit; but also because he was musical instructor to the Bridgewater family.

86 This and the succeeding two lines are complementary to Laves Smooth dittied—smoothly worded

87. Notice the alliteration

88-91. Nor of .. occasion - his faith is not less than his musical skill His business being to keep watch over the flocks upon the hills, he is most likely to be present on this occasion, and nearest for the immediate aid required

92 Viewless — invisible, conspicuous by absence

93 The star — the planet Venus, the evening star, called Hesperus It is also called Lucifer, the morning star, when appearing before dawn Fold — to pen.

94. It is high up in the sky.

95 Gilded day — Apollo, the sun God was supposed to ride in a golden chariot every day across the sky.

96 His — its Allay — quench His glowing .. allay — the axle of the sun's chariot is supposed to be burning not on account of the journey — Cf Nat Ode 84

97 Steep Atlantic stream — according to the ancients the ocean was a great river flowing round the earth, hence the word stream

98 Slope — sloping, the sun sunk below the horizon

99 Dusky pole — the upper sky which becomes dusky as the sun sets

100-101. Pacing east — the ancients believed that the sun went round the earth and that it journeyed during the night under the earth to the East, where it rose the next morning Other-goal — the East was the goal of the sun's night journey The reference in line 101 is to Ps cix 5, "The sun as a bridegroom cometh out of his chamber"

104 Tipsy — partially intoxicated

105. Braid twine — wreath your hair with garlands of roses

106 Diffusing fragrance and moist with wine

107-110 Rigour, Advice, Age, Severity are personified abstractions Rigour — strictness (in conduct) Advice — deliberation Scrupulous — full of scruples, conscientious Saws — maxims

111 Of purer fire — not made of lighter elements, having a divine nature Plato believed that pure fire was the constituent element of all divine objects 112 Starry quire — the reference is to Pythagoras' Theory of the "music of the spheres" It was supposed that the planets while moving produced musical sounds which formed a celestial harmony

113. Nightly watchful—sleepless during night The stars are supposed to keep watch at night

111. The months and years dance quickly to their music, i.e., they lead the months and years in a regular dance

115 Sounds—straits of the sea. Finny drove—a crowd of fishes

116. The waters appear to be affected by the moon, and set dancing. Morris—morris or moorish dance introduced into England in the reign of Edward III

117. Tawny--of a yellowish colour Shelves—Banks of streams; flat ledges of rock

118 Trip—dance Pert—lively Dapper—brave, active and small.

119 Dimpled--having eddies and swirls

120 Trim—neat, tidy, beautiful

121 Wakes—on evening merry-making

123 Sweets—sweet things

124 Venus—the goddess of love

125 Rights—i.e., rites

126 i.e., The only sin is the sin of being found out Daylight reveals the sin

127 Dun shades—Dusky smoky shades

129 Cotytto—the goddess of licentiousness whose festival called Cotyttia was observed at night, under cover of darkness with great licentiousness

131. Called—invoked by the worshippers

130-131 The dragon, dark, and gloom—night is figured as a monster of hell, and gloom is an ugly offspring ejected from her womb Stygan—see *Lleg 3* Spets—spits or ejects

133 Creates universal or uniform darkness all around

134 Stay—Check the progress of. Ebon Black is ebony

135 Hecate—A Thracian goddess supposed to wander over the earth at night, accompanied by a multitude of witches She was the goddess and patroness of magic

136. Vowed priests - devotees, votaries. Till utmost end - till we have fully performed all your rites

138 Blabbing eastern scout - i.e., the morning which tells tales to the sun

139 Nice - fastidious; squeamish The Indian steep - the Himalayas

140 Cabined loop-hole - the faint light of the early dawn, peeping through clouds, suggests the idea of some one looking through a small window

141 Tell-tale sun - Helios (sun) is said to have informed Vulcan (Venus' husband) of the amours of Venus and Mars Descri - relate, describe

142 Solemnity - ceremony.

144. Fantastic round - unrestrained dance in which the dancers join hands Cf *L'Alleg* 34 and 35

STAGE DIRECTION.

Measure - dance Comus and his companions join in a dance - in a wild rude and wanton Antic This dance is interrupted as "the Lady" approaches

145 Break off - stop dancing Different pace - i.e., the chaste steps of the Lady different from the pace of voluptuous revelry.

146 Chaste footing - i.e., the tread of the chaste Lady

147 Shrouds - hiding places Brakes, thickets

148 Some virgin - it is some virgin Sure, surely

150. Now to, etc - i.e., now I will have recourse to, etc.

151. Willy trains - snares of allurements.

153-4 Thus I hurl . . . air - the actor who personates Comus throws some powder into the air which by a stage device is kindled and produces a flash of blue light. Dazzling spells - illusive or magic dust Spongy air - because it sucks up and retains the 'Magic dust'

155 "Enchantment powerful enough to deceive the eye with illusory appearances" Blear - Dimming, blurring the vision

156 Presentiments - appearances, representations

157 Quaint habits - curious dresses

158 Suspicious flight - flight produced by suspicion.

159 Against my course—against my custom, "what I never do"

160. Friendly ends—the best intentions

161. Well placed—suitable, well arranged Glazing—flattering, insinuating, feigning

162 Baited etc.—rendered attractive with specious arguments

164 Wind me—suggests the insinuating approach of a serpent and hugs suggests the crushing grasp of the boa constrictor Easy hearted—unsuspicious.

165 Virtue—peculiar power

167 Who is poor but whom economy keeps occupied with his rustic business even at this late hour

168 Fairly—gently, softly

170 If true—if I heard all right or correctly.

171. My now—because her eyes were useless in the darkness

172 Ill-managed—disorderly

173 Jocund—merry Gamesome—lively, cheerful

174 Loose unlettered hinds—uncontrolled illiterate peasants

175 For—on account of Teeming—prolific, pregnant Granges full—barns well stored with produce

176 Pan—the God of universal nature

177 And amiss—Puritan Milton would naturally hold that the gods should be thanked in solemn acts of devotion, and not by wonton revelry.

178 Swilled insolence—rudeness produced by drunkenness

179 Wassailers—drinking revellers (lines 171-179 refer to festivals like the "Harvest home" which the farmers celebrated with feasting and drinking and all sorts of rough merry-making)

180 Inform—direct Unacquainted—that do not know the way

181. Blind mazes—the most intricate labyrinths Tangled—entangled.

184 Spreading favour -(trans epithet) the spreading branches of the trees showed them favour by giving them shade and shelter

187 Kind hospitable woods - an instance of Pathetic Fallacy (attribution of human feelings to inanimate objects)

188 Grey-hooded even - evening is compared to a pilgrim clad in greyhood

189 Sad - sober, serious Votarist - votary; under a vow of pilgrimage Palmer - a pilgrim, who brought a palm branch from Palestine as a token that he had fulfilled his vow Weed - garment, dress

190 "Came from the extreme limit of western horizon" Phœbus' wain - the chariot of the sun

192 Labour - burden, what seriously occupies my thought.

193 Engaged - ventured, committed

194 Envious - the darkness envies the lady the possession of two such brothers

195 Stole - stolen Else - if not, otherwise

196 Felonious end - criminal design

197 Dark lantern - a lantern having a metal slide which can be turned in order to conceal the light

199. Due light - i.e., light due.

203. Rife - thick and dense, prevalent Perfect - perfectly clear to

204 Single - total

205. Fantasies - fancies

207 Beekoning shadows dire - an instance of what Earle calls the "Ambidextral (two handed) adjective"

208. Syllable - pronounce clearly In the *calling shapes beckoning shadows*, and *airy tongues* we perceive anticipations of that expressive vagueness which was a prominent characteristic of Milton's poetry

210 Startle well - well startle (take by surprise) Astound - bewilder, confound

212 Siding - defending, assisting.

213 Pure-eyed Faith—*Pure eyed*—is an appropriate epithet for faith which demands sincerity of motive and purity of heart
 White-handed Hope—as the eye is the symbol of faith, the hand is the symbol of hope Hand—signifies helpfulness White—clean

214 Hovering angel—hope hovers (is on the wing, but does not disappear) as a golden winged angel to protect her

216. Eye . visibly - i.e., you are real to me not mere creations of the imagination

219 Glistening guardian—a shining angel which guards.

221 As the Lady is speaking she sees a gleam of moonlight through a rift in the cloud and takes it as a sign of God's favour

222 The metaphor is that of a black coat lined inside with silver cloth

227 Made to be heard—caused to be heard

228 New-enlivened spirits spirits that have been newly enlivened The sight of the silver lined cloud had reassured the lady and encouraged her afresh

229. Prompt me—to call to my brothers

SONG

The Lady sings the song in order to attract the attention of her brothers The address to echo is appropriate in a double sense . (1) she wishes to rouse the echoes of the wood to attract her brother's attention , and (2) to appeal to Echo who has also sustained a loss, that of Narcissus

230 Echo—In Greek mythology Echo was a mountain nymph who fell in love with a beautiful youth, named Narcissus , but her love was not returned and she pined away till only her voice was left Narcissus was punished by being made to fall in love with his own image in a fountain and because he could not reach it he pined away and was changed into the Narcissus flower. Unseen—because nothing more than a voice

231 Aery shell—the vault of heaven , the atmosphere

232. Meander—a river in Asia Minor famous for its circuitous course Different explanations have been given for Milton's reference to this river in connection with Echo (1) that the Meander

was associated with music and misfortune, e.g., the story of Marsyas and the legend of the maiden Byblis, (2) that the course of the river ever returning on itself is like a repeated echo, (3) that the Meander was famous for its swans, sweet birds of song, favourite with the Greek and Latin poets Margent - margin, edge

233 Violet embroidered vale -- valley ornamented with violets (symbols of love and innocence) Perhaps a special valley (the wood lands to the North West of Athens) is intended in which Sophocles was born Sophocles speaks of Colonus his birth place as the haunt of nightingales and Aristophanes calls Athens "the violet crowned city"

234 Love-lorn nightingale -- "Forsaken by ones loved one"
(See note II 56) Another legend of the nightingale was that a woman named Aedon who killed her son by mistake, was changed into a nightingale, and, continually mourned for her child

235. Her mourneth -- sings mournfully her sad song

236 Pair -- she means her two brothers.

240 Tell me but -- only tell me.

241 Parley -- discourse, conversation Daughter of the sphere -- either born of the atmosphere, as she was the offspring of Air and Tellus, or drawing her being from the "music of the spheres"

242 So -- if thou tellest me Translated -- raised aloft.

243. Add the graceful effect of the echo to the music of the spheres

244 Mortal . mould -- Any mortal made of clay, any human being

245 Sing a song that by its heavenly harmony carries one into transports of joy Ravishment -- Ecstasy

246 Something holy, some holy being

247. Raptures -- (Effect for cause) Moves . air -- fills the air till it becomes vocal Vocal -- here is used proleptically

248 The God within the Lady proves his presence in her by means of this divine music

249 They—the notes of the Lady's voice Wings of silence—
silence is compared to a bird upon whose wings the strains are
carried to the listener

250 Empty vaulted night—night is compared to a vault 'free
from sound So, silent night.

251-252 Darkness is compared to a bird which covers the earth
with its dark wings and which smooths its ruffled plumage by the
effect of the music. Fall—cadence Raven-down—Feathers as
black as the raven's Smiled—was pleased

253. Sirens—Leucosia, Lysia, and Parthenope, daughters of
the river-god Achelous They resided on a rocky island near the
coast of Sicily and by their beautiful singing lure the sailors of-
passing vessels to destruction.

254. Flowery kirtled Naiades—Naiades (nymphs who lived in
streams and rivers) with gowns made of flowers

256 Prisoned soul—captivated the soul. Prisoned is used
proleptically here

257 Lap—infold; absorb, transport Elysium—the abode of
the spirits of the blessed Scylla—a sea nymph, was the rival of
Circe in the affections of the sea god Glaucus, and through the
malice of Circe was transformed into a monster surrounded by bark-
ing dogs, but she was afterwards changed by Glaucus into the
rock Scylla, off the coast of Sicily, surrounded by warring
waves

259 Felt—cruel Charybdis—a whirlpool on the Sicilian,
coast opposite Scylla. Charybdis was an avaricious woman who was
changed into a whirlpool by Jupiter for stealing the oxen of
Hercules. Lulled—paralysed

261. Robbed it of itself—made the listener unconscious.

262. Home felt—keenly or deeply felt.

263 Sober certainty—opposite to sweet madness Waking
bliss—opposite to pleasing slumber

265. Hail foreign wonder—health to you wonderful stranger

266. Certain—certainly, for certain truth

267. Unless—unless thou be.

- 310 Sure feet—almost certain knowledge of the way belonging to people who have frequently been there
- 312 Dingle—a depression between two steep hills Dells—valleys
313. Bosky bourn—a rivulet lined with bushes
- 314 Daily walks—which are my daily walks.
- 315 Attendance—attendants Lodged—i.e., in some cottage.
- 316 Shroud—shrouded, sheltered.
- 317 Low roosted lark—the lark that has its resting place on the ground
318. Thatched pallet—bed made of straw or grass Rouse—awake If otherwise—if you decide otherwise, if you put off the search to to-morrow.
- 325-326 Where . pretended—courtesy, although it is derived from court, yet it is not as readily found in courts as in humbler places
- 327 Less warranted—having less guarantee of safety
- 329 Eye me—keep watch over me. Square my trial, etc.—let my trials be in proportion to the strength I have to meet them.
- Exeunt—they go out
331. Unmuffle—uncover.
332. Wontest—art wont Benison—blessing
- 333 Visage—face Amber—yellowish, golden
- 334 Disinherit—drive out Chaos—(confusion) here darkness
337. Usurping mists—i.e., the clouds being in illegal possession of the sky
- 338 Rush-candle—a candle made of rush, a marshy plant Wicker hole—hole in the wicker work (basket-work)
- 340 Long level rule—straight horizontal beam of light
341. Star of Arcady—any star in the constellation of the great Bear by which the Greek sailors steered Callisto, an Arcadian princess, was transformed by Jupiter into a she-bear. When her son was on the point of killing her, the god translated them to the skies making Callisto the great Bear and her son, Arcos, the little Bear, which was also called *Cynosura* from its resemblance to a dog's tail.

- 342 Tyrian - belonging to Tyre.
343. Barred - barred from , deprived of
- 344 Penned - fastened. Wattled cotes - enclosures made of hurdles
- 345 Pastoral . stops - " the oaten pipe upon which shepherds play "
347. i.e , by periodically crowing to the hens
349. Innumeros - innumerable
- 353 Bolster - a long round pillow on cushion
- 348 Savage hunger - hungry animals Savage heat - licentious people
- 359 Over exquisite - too inquisitive
- 360 To cast the fashion - to calculate or conjecture the particular form
361. Grant - let us suppose So - real evils, as you suppose
- 362 Wherefore should a man anticipate the time of his grief
366. To seek - wanting , at a loss
- 367 Unprincipled . book - unversed in the principles of virtue.
368. Bosoms - has in bosom ; holds
- 369 Single noise - want of light and noise alone
373. Virtue could see, etc. - i.e , the virtuous man is guided by his own inward light in the thickest outward darkness
- 375 Flat - level Wisdom's self - wisdom herself.
- 376 Seeks to - applies herself to , repairs to
- 378 Plumes - smoothes or trims (like a bird).
- 379 Various - varied Bustle of resort - noise and tumult of towns
- 380 All too-ruffled - altogether disarranged
- 382 Centre of the earth - the idea is of total darkness.
- 384 Benighted - i.e , in utter darkness
- 385 He is enchained by his own foul and wicked thoughts.
- 386 Most affects - is most inclined to , seeks or likes most.
- 389 Senate house - the place where the Roman senate met was regarded as sacred.
391. Maple dish - a dish made of the wood of the maple-tree.

393 Hesperian tree—the tree of Juno, which grew in the garden of the Hesperides, the daughters of Hesperus (West), and which was guarded by the sleepless dragon, Ladon. The tree bore golden apples

395 Unenchanted—not to be enchanted.

397. Bold incontinence—unchaste men, licentious people

398 Unsunned—not exposed to the sun, hidden

491 Danger—dangerous people Wink—be blind to.

401 It recks me not—I don't care

405 Dog them both—follow closely upon night and loneliness
Dread events—robbery and ravishment

106 Ill greeting touch—a touch that greets with a bad purpose

407 Unowned—unprotected, lonely

109. Without—beyond

410-411 “Where the issue depends equally upon circumstances to be dreaded, and to be hoped, I incline to hope” Poise—balance
Arbitrate—judge

413 Squint suspicion—squinting suspicion Squinting (looking sideways) being an expression of suspicion.

418 I mean that too—i.e., she is protected by the strength of heaven

419 If heaven gave it—even although heaven gave it.

421 Complete steel—a panoply of steel

422 Quivered nymph—a nymph bearing a quiver of arrows

The reference is to Diana, goddess of chastity Keen—sharp.

423 Unharboured—without shelter.

424 Infamous—of evil fame

426 Mountaneer—used in a bad sense for wild and lawless.

429 Grotts—caves Shagged—rugged

430 Unblanched—undaunted.

433 The allusion here is to the different orders and powers of demons believed in the middle ages

434 Blue meagre hag—a thin and blue looking witch
Unlaid ghost—a disembodied spirit that wandered restless.

435 This line refers to the popular superstition that the ghosts were permitted to be at large at night after curfew time till the time of cock crowing Curfew--See *Il Pen* 71.

436 Swart . mine --it was believed among the miners that mines were haunted by spirits (gnomes) that pretended to work like the miners themselves

439 Antiquity . Greece --proof or authority from the classical writings of the philosophers of Greece

440 Arms--strength , might

441. Dian--Diana, the goddess of hunting and the moon goddess of virginity was said to have been proof against the shafts of Cupid.

442 Silver shafted queen--as a huntress she uses shafts (arrows) as the moon goddess she is furnished with shafts (rays)

443 Tamed subdued Brinded - streaked or striped

444 Spotted mountain-pard -leopard , a panther

445 Frivolous--the word refers to Cupid in his lower character as the wanton god of sensual love

447 Snaky-headed Gorgon's shield--the Gorgons were three hideous monsters with wings, brazen claws and enormous teeth, and serpents on their heads instead of hair One of them, Medusa, was slain by Perseus. He presented the head to Minerva the goddess of wisdom, who wore it in her shield Whoever looked at the face of the monsters was turned to stone Minerva used her shield to confound Cupid with this power

448 Unconquered virgin -Minerva was a virgin goddess typifying the union of power and wisdom She sprang full grown and full armed from the head of Jupiter to help him in his wars with the giants

449 Freezed--froze Congealed - used proleptically ; she froze the stone until it became congealed

450 But--except Rigid--strict , severe ; freezing Chaste austerity--strictly chaste woman

451 Dashed--confounded

452 Blank awe—the awe of one who is white or pale with amazement or fear

140-452 The argument is that in the Greek legends the dread bow of Diana and the Gargon shield of Minerva were symbolical of virtue.

454 Sincerely so—sincerely or entirely chaste.

455 Liveried—dressed in the livery (servant's uniform) of heaven Lackey—attend, wait upon A lackey was a foot boy who ran or walked by the side of his master.

457 Dream . . vision—in visions a higher degree of revelation was supposed to be imparted than in dreams Dreams occur in sleep and visions in the waking state

458. Gross ear—thick heavy ear, (profane)

159 Oft converse—frequent intercourse or communion

160 Begin . beam, etc—begin to illuminate the body

161. Unpolluted—because belonging to chaste person Temple of the mind—i.e., body Of St Paul's words, " your body is a temple of the holy spirit "

462 Soul's essence—i.e., a life of purity and spiritual communion with God spiritualise the body and makes it immortal

464 Unchaste looks—Christ taught an unchaste look was as sinful as the sin itself

465 Most—above all Lewd—originally, ignorant, then lustful, licentious Lavish act of sin—sinful acts, unrestrained and profuse.

466 Results in the pollution of the mind and soul (as well as the body)

467-469—i.e., the pollution infects the soul and by dragging it down to a carnal and brutish level destroys its essential character (or original nature) The divine being—Plato says " the soul resembles the divine, the body the mortal " " Milton is here reproducing a portion of the philosophy of Plato's *Phaedo*, 69, in which Socrates is describing souls that have so cultivated communion with the body and served and loved it, and been bewitched by it through desires and pleasures, as to have become contaminated,

impregnated with that which is corporeal, and thus at the death of the body rendered unfit to soar to heaven, but weighed down to earth and wandering as shadowy visible phantoms amongst monuments and tombs "

471 Charnel vaults—burial vaults

475. Degenerate and degraded--degenerate because the soul loses its genus (spirit), and degraded because it loses its grade (human)

476 Divine philosophy—i.e., Plato's philosophy Plato said that philosophy at first lived in heaven and it was Socrates who brought it down to earth

477 Crabbed—sour, ill-natured (uninteresting)

479 Nectared sweets—Nectar was the drink of the gods

480 Crude surfeit—i.e., philosophy does not disagree with the stomach and never cloy's the taste List—Listen

483 Night foundered benighted, confounded or overpowered by darkness

486 Again, etc.—he hears the noise again and this time nearer to them

487 Best draw—the best course for us would be to draw our swords

488 He comes well—he is welcome

489 It is right to fight in self-defence, may God be on our side Habited—dressed

490. The attendant spirit had hallooed before entering

491 You fall, etc.—or you will run on our swords.

494. Thyrsis—the traditional shepherd named in pastoral poetry In lines 494–512 we have a compliment to *Lives*.

495 Huddling—the waters crowd together as they stop charmed by the melody Madrigal—a shepherd's song

496 Sweetened—i.e., the music made the flowers even more fragrant.

499 Wether—castrated ram Straggling—gone astray Pent—penned, shut up in a pen. Forsook—forsaken

501 This is addressed to the second brother

- 502 On . toy—in search of commonplace trifle
 504 Pilfering—thievish Fleecy wealth—the wealth of the
 ancients consisted in flocks of sheep.
 505. Downs—sheep pastures
 506. To this my errand—in comparison with this errand of
 mine The care it brought—the consequent anxiety.
 508. How chance—"How happens it"
 509 Sadly—seriously Without blame—without any fault of
 ours
 414 Shallow ignorance—ignorant and shallow people
 515. Sage poets—Homer, Virgil, Tasso and Spenser. Muse—
 Poetic inspiration supposed to come from God
 516. Storied—related, narrated
 517. Chimeras—the Chimera was a terrible fire-vomiting
 monster with a lion's head, dragon's tail and goat's body En-
 charned Isles—the islands of Circe and Calypso mentioned in the
 Odyssey.
 518 Rifted Rocks—rocks with yawning chasms The Greeks
 believed the passage to hell to be a cave near cape Taenarus,
 in the south of Greece, the Romans, a cave near Lake Avernus,
 in Campania
 520 Navel—heart, midst, centre
 521 Immured—enclosed Cypress—the shade of the cypress
 is the gloomiest of all Its foliage are a sign of mourning
 525 Sly enticement—cunning inducement Baneful—poison-
 ous
 526 Murmurs—spells and incantations muttered by witches
 while preparing a magic potion Pleasing poison—oxymoron.
 529-530 Unmoulding face—destroying or defacing the
 stamp of reason impressed on the human face The metaphor is
 from coining
 532. Brow—overhang Bottom glade—the glade which slopes
 down to the valley
 533 Monstrous rout—rout or band of monsters
 534 Stabled wolves—wolves living in their dens

539. Unweeting—unknowing

540 Late—lately By then—by the time that

542 Dew-besprent—sprinkled with dew

544 Canopied and interwove—covered as with a canopy and interwoven *Canopied* applies to bank ; *interwove* to ivy

545 Flaunting—showy.

546 In a serious meditative mood, not in gloomy dejection.

547 To devote myself to my country music.

548 Fancy—desire, a poetic fit. Erea close--before finishing my song

550 Barbarous dissonance—sounds that were rudely discordant with the shepherd's song

551 Listened—to Them—refers either to the number of sounds or to the people making the sounds

552 Unusual stop—refers to l 145 where the routs broke off at the Lady's approach

553-554 Sleep is represented as riding in a closely curtained chariot drawn by sleepy horses which were frightened by the noise, the cessation of sound brought peace to the horses

555. Refers to the Lady's song, l 230.

556. The soft swelling music compared to perfume for its sweetness

557-560 That even . displace—i.e., the Lady's song was so soft and sweet that she was taken unawares, and was so captivated that she would have willingly abdicated her place (or given up her existence) if her place could have been taken for ever by such singing All ear—i.e., listening intently

561-562 Create death—Breathe life even into a skeleton Death is often represented as a ghastly bare-ribbed skeleton.

565 Harrowed—torn

566 Nightingale—the lady is compared to a nightingale because she was singing so sweetly in the dark

567 "And how near thou art to the fatal trap of the fowler, alluding to the practice of setting traps to catch the nightingale by night"

569. Which I have after trodden in the day time—with which I am familiar.

572 Certain signs—See l. 654

574. Aidless—helpless Wished--wished for.

575. Such two—two persons such as she described.

578. Sprung—sprang; began to run

581. Triple knot—threefold league of Night, Shades and Hell.

585 Lean safely depend on it confidently. Not one—not a sentence of what I said shall be withdrawn

588 Which chance—which men erroneously call chance.

589-590 The virtuous person may be tried by evil influences, but he can never be really or permanently injured by them En-thrall'd—enslaved

591 Even harm—even that which the power of evil intended to be most harmful

592 Happy trial—a trial which results in victory Glory=Glorious

593 Recoil—spring back, return upon The figure is from an engine that springs back

595 i.e., It will gradually be separated like the dross which rises to the surface of molten metal and leaves the metal pure; then settled on itself, it will pray upon itself till it is consumed

597 Self-fed and self-consumed—supplying its own self as fuel which will be consumed by its own fire

598 Pillared firmament—the ancients supposed the universe to be a temple of which the sky is the roof and earth the base Rottenness—a rotten structure

599 Base -foundation Stubble—stamps of corn left in the ground; hence, weak Let's on—let us go on

600-601 " May I never fight for a cause which is against the will of God and against which His power is ranged "

603. Grisly—terrible, causing horror

604 Sooty—black Acheron—one of the rivers of Hell

605 Harpies—unclean monsters with heads of maidens and bodies of birds. Hydras—monstrous water snakes

606 Africa and Ind.—Africa and India, when little known, were regarded as the abodes of the strangest creatures

607 Return—back-(tautology) i.e., give up his spoils

608 Curis—were considered in Milton's time as a mark of the voluptuary

609 Cursed—i.e., his death will be as cursed Venturous—ready to venture

610 Yet—nevertheless Empire—enterprise

611. Can-stead—can do the little service

614 Unthread—Loosen, dislocate

615. Crumble—to break into small pieces

617 As relation—as to be able to relate this to us Shifts—contrivances

618 Surprisal—the act of surprising

619 A certain shepherded lad—the supposed reference is to Milton's school friend, Charles Diodati, who died in 1638

620 Of to—i.e., his appearance was not imposing

625 Even to ecstasy—he listened till he went into raptures

626 Requital—reward Scrip—bag, wallet

627 Simple—a single ingredient in a compound medicine, herbs.

628 Vigorous faculties—potent qualities and functions

629. Unsightly—not pleasing to the eye

630 Curled me out, picked out for me Pickles and golden flower.
—These, according to Coleridge symbolise respectively the sorrows and triumphs of Christian life

634 Unknown . esteemed—"Not known and not esteemed"

635 Clouted shoon—patched shoes

636 Molly—the plant given by Mercury to Ulysses for protection against magic when the latter was approaching Circe's island

637 Hermes—mercury the messenger of Jupiter Ulysses, King of Ithaca, the wisest of the Greeks who took part in the Trojan War

638 Haemony — *c*, Thessalian root Haemonia — being an ancient home of Thessaly

640 Mildew — a disease of plants caused by the growth of fungi.

641. Fairies — terrible evil spirits called up by magic

642. I put it in my purse but took little account of it

646-647. Entered off — "I entered into the very midst of his treacherous enchantments and yet escaped in safety" Lime twigs — branches covered with bird-lime for catching birds

649. Necromancer — sorcerer, wizard

651. Brandished blade — sword waved in the air

652 Luscious — delicious, sweet

653 Vide ll. 815-819.

654 Menace high — fierce threats

655 Sons of Vulcan — Vulcan was the god of fire Of one of his sons, Cacus, it is said that when pursued by Hercules he vomitted volumes of smoke from his mouth

658 Bear — may bear (a wish) Deliciousness — delightful things Puts by — refuses Gets about — Tries

660 Chained up — turned to Alabaster — a kind of fine marble.

661 Daphne — was an Arcadian goddess daughter of the river god Peneus, who was pursued by Apollo She was transformed into a laurel by her father, hence Apollo's partiality for the laurel wreath

662 Fled Appollo — fled from Apollo

664 Corporial rind — bodily covering, the body

665 Imm'anacled — fettered, chained While good — so long as God permits

669-671. Fancy season — "that the imagination can suggest to the mind of youth, when the blood is young and circulates in the veins as quickly as flowers open in spring"

672 Cordial Julep — heart reviving sweet drink

673 Crystal bounds — cups made of crystal

675 Nepenthes — was the name of a wonderful drug given by Palydamna, the wife of Thon, to Helen, who was said to be the daughter of Jupiter and Leda

682. Invert trust—subvert the conditions of her credit
- 683 Harshly deal—i.e., by refusing the means of restoration
Ill—dishonest
- 685 Unexempt condition—condition from which no one can be exempted.
- 686 Mortal frailty—weak human nature
- 688 That—you that
- 690 This—i.e., the julep
- 696 Brewed enchantments—drinks that have been brewed under magical incantations
- 697 Betrayed—deceived Credulous believing soon, unsuspecting.
- 698 Visored—disguised Forgery—fabrication.
- 700 Lickerish—appetising.
- 701 For Juno—fit for Juno, the queen of heaven
- 702 Treasonous offer—treasonable offer, the drink offered treacherously
- 707 Budge fur—"those morose and rigid teachers of abstinence and mortification who wear the gown of the Stoic Philosophy." Budge (1) Lamb's fur worn on the hoods of Bachelors of Arts (2) Surly, formal. Of the stoic fur—of the school of stoics The reference is to their fur-lined academic hoods The Stoic School of Philosophy was founded by Zeno about 308 B C The Stoics held that men should cultivate self-repression and be indifferent to pleasure and pain
- 708 Cynic tub—the reference is Diogenes, the cynic philosophers, who is said to have lived in a tub The Stoics were called Cynics on account their snarling disposition
- 709 Lean . abstinence—because abstinence makes one thin and pale.
- 711 Unwithdrawing—ungrudging, lavish
- 714 Sate—satisfy Curious—fastidious
- 715 Set—she set
- 716 Shops—the leaves of the mulberry tree

- 718 Her own loins—in the bowels of the earth
 719 Hatched—stored up Ore—gold.
 721 Pot of temperance—sudden fit of abstinence
 723 The all giver—Gr Pandora, a word applied to the earth as
 the source of all riches Probably Comus meant God, because even
 the devil can quote scriptures for his own purpose
 724 “Men would be ignorant of half the good gifts God has
 provided, and yet would despise them”
 726 Penurious niggard—poverty-stricken miser
 727 Bastard—an illegitimate child who can not inherit his
 father's estate because he is not a legal son at all Cf Heb 12-8.
 728 Who—Nature Surcharged—overcharged
 729. Strangled—suffocated Waste fertility—wasted ferti-
 lity
 730 Winged plumes—i.e., “the air being full of flying
 birds, would be darkened by their feathers”
 731. Over-multitude—outnumber Lords—masters (men)
 733 Emblaze—make brilliant or splendid Forehead—surface
 735 Inured—accustomed to Shameless—brazen boldness.
 737 Coy—shy. Cozened—cheated.
 741 Partaken—shared with another
 744. It—beauty Languished—languishing
 745 Brag—boast (justly)
 748 Homely—plain Keep home—keep at home The play
 is on the word *home*
 750. Of sorry grain—of poor colour Ply—knit
 751. Sampler—sample of needlework. Tease—to combat.
 752 Vermell-tinctured lips—Vermilion coloured lips.
 756-761 These lines are spoken aside, not addressed to Comus
 758 As mine eyes—as he has charmed mine eyes.
 759 Thrusting specious arguments on behalf of evil. Prank
 —adorned in a showy manner.
 760 Bolt—to sift, separate.
 761. Check her pride—reprove her insolence.
 762. Here she addresses Comus.

- 763 Would --wished Riotous--indulge in extravagant luxury
764. Abundance --abundant gifts Cateress -- stewardess
- 770 Lewdly pampered luxury--viciously gluttonous luxury
- 772 Dispensed --dist^{ibuted}
- 774 And nature would not at all be overburdened with her gifts
- 776 Due--duly Swinish Gluttony--gross gluttons
- 778 Besotted --foolish ; infatuated
- 779 Grams--himself. Blasphemes --reviles , curses.
- 782 Sun-clad --i.e , chastity is enveloped with a pure light which dazzles all presumptuous eyes
- 783 Yet . ..end--it would not serve any purpose
- 784 Nornor--neither, nor Both physical and intellectual unfitness
- 785 Sublime notion--of chastity and love Mystery --"that the body is for the Lord and the Lord for the body."
- 788 Art worthy --thou deservest (in a bad sense)
- 789 Than this--i.e , the enjoyment of sensual bliss.
790. Notice the contempt and sarcasm in this line Rhetoric --as the instrument of sophistry
- 791 Her dazzling fence --i.e., how to use such weapons of sophistry as may deceive the unwary
- 792 Note the stinging sarcasm Convinced --refuted.
- 793 Uncontrolled --infinite ; unlimited.
- 794 Kindle--inflamm Kindled --(used proleptically) transported.
- 795 Sacred vehemence--holy enthusiasm.
797. Brute--senseless Her nerves--the strength or assistance of her nerves.
- 798 Magic structures--magic palaces or specious arguments
- 800 She fables not--i.e , she speaks the truth.
801. Set off--shown to the best advantage ; made more forcible
- 802 Not mortal--I am not mortal Shuddering dew--(Tr. epithet) the cold sweat of fear covering the body of the person shuddering.

803 Dips--moistens.

804-5. Speaks .. crew—the reference is to the war between Zeus and the Titans (led by Saturn) when Zeus with the aid of thunder and lightning cast the Titans into the Hell Speaks—(unless taken in the sense of (denounces) is an instances of Zeugma. Dissemble—conceal my feelings (of fear)

806 No more—: e, no more of your idle talk

807. Moral babble—childish or nonsensical talk of morality.

808. Canon laws—established rules, fixed rules. Foundation—society; establishment (the society of Comus)

809-10 Tis... blood—"your opinions are due to the black-humours which have affected your mind" The allusion is to the old medical theory that the human temperament was formed by the varied intermixture of four humours in the body, viz, blood, phlegm, choler, and melancholy Lees—dregs. Settlings—sediments

811 Straight—immediately; at once; in no time

813 Beyond . dreams—more than the delight than men dream of.

816 Without reversed—it was an old superstition that a counter-charm could be worked by reversing the wand and repeating the charms in an inverse order

817. Mutters—murmurings Disserving—separating, parting

822 Melibœus—a shepherd in Virgil's Eclogues—possibly the reference is to Spenser because the story of Sabrina is found in the *Faerie Queene*

823 Sootheest shepherd—truest or most faithful poet

825. Moist—because Sabrina was a water-nymph.

826 Sabrina—Latin name of the river Severn. Brute a mythical king of Britain, and a supposed descendent of Æneas, the son of Anchises, divided the kingdom of Albion among his three sons, Lochrine, Albanat, and Camber, Lochrine married Guendolen daughter of the king of Cornwall, but secretly loved Estrildis, the daughter of a king in Germany When the king of Cornwall was dead. Lochrine divorced Guendolen, who in order to take revenge led an army against Lochrine Lochrine was killed, and Estrildis and

her daughter, Sabrina (by Locrine) were thrown into the river. The river was called after the girl's name, and she was supposed to rule it as its deity.

827. Whilom—formerly, of old

831. Delivered her beautiful innocent self to the waters

832. That stopped her course by flowing across the path

834. Pearled—adorned with bracelets of pearls (Pearls were found in the rivers of ancient Britain)

835. Nereus' Hall—the bottom of the sea Nereus was an ocean deity, the father of the fifty nymphs called the Nereids

836. Reared. head—raised his bending herd

837. Imbathe—baths in Nectared lavers—baths sweetened with nectar Asphadel—daffodil

839. And through each sense, which was a gate and inlet into her being.

840. Ambrosial—heavenly (i.e., of heavenly scent or healing power).

841. Quick immortal change—a change that quickly made her immortal.

842. Made—(participial construction) being made

844. Twilight meadows—i.e., she visits the meadows at twilight.

845. Helping. blasts—remedying the malignant influence of evil spirits Ill-luck signs—bad omens

846. Shrewd—malicious, wicked

847. Vialled—kept in phials (bottles)

850. Garland wreaths—(tautological) as a token of gratitude

852. Old swain—i.e., Meliboeus). Masson points out that "neither Geoffrey of Monmouth nor Spenser has this development of the legend."

853. Grasping charm—gripping spell (*vide*, l. 660).

857. Hard besetting need—danger that touches her so hard

858. Adjuring—commanding by something sacred.

863. Amber-dropping hair—hair having a golden colour and sweet fragrance Masson explains it as, "hair of amber (luminous

yellow) coloured with the water-drops falling through it," and Verity points out that Sabrina's yellow locks symbolise the colour of the river "waves."

868. Oceanus—was the god of the constantly 'flowing river that, according the ancients, surrounded the flat circular earth. He was the son of Heaven and Earth, and father of all river-gods and water-nymphs.

869. Earth-shaking mace—the trident of Neptune, who caused earthquakes.

870. Tethys—wife of Oceanus, mother of the Oceanids and river-gods.

872. Carpathian wizard—Proteus, who lived in the island of Carpathus in the Mediterranean. He, as Neptune's shepherd, tended the sea-calves with a hook. He had the power of assuming different shapes.

873. Scaly Triton—Triton was the¹ trumpeter of Neptune, called scaly, because the lower part of his body² was like that of a fish. Winding shell—trumpet, which he blew to calm the waves.

874. Glaucus—a Boeotian fisherman, who was changed into a sea-god and regarded as an oracle by sailors. Sooth saying—predicting.

875. Leucothea—('the white goddess') Ino, daughter of Cadmus, who threw herself into the sea with her son Melicertes when madly pursued by her husband Athamas. She and her son were changed into sea-deities by Neptune.

876 Her son—Melicertes, who was called Palaemon by the Greeks, and Portumnus or 'god of harbours' by the Romans.

877 Thetis—daughter of Nereus, and mother of Achilles. Homer calls her *silver-footed*. *Tinsel-slippers* (denotes the idea of sparkling or glistening) with flashing feet. Trench calls this epithet "a poem in miniature", and observes that, "it brings up the flash of the waters."

878-80 Sirens--the three Sirens were Parthenope, Ligea, and Lucosia. Parthenope's tomb was at Naples. Ligea is represented as a mermaid, provided with a comb to smoothe her hair.

881-82. Where with—with which. Diamond rocks—very hard or glittering rocks (like diamonds). Sleeking—making glossy.

886. Coral-paven—paved with coral.

887. Bridle—restrain, as by a bridle.

890. Rushy-fringed—fringed with rushes.

891. Osier—a species of willow, the little branches of which are used for making baskets. Dank—damp; moist.

892. Sliding chariot—boat gliding smoothly over the water.

893. Set—zeugma. Agate—a precious stone of different colours.

Sheen—brightness

894. Turkis—turquoise, a blue stone, so called because it came through Turkey from Persia

895. Channel—Severn

897. Printless feet—feet that leave no marks

898. Velvet—refers to the soft woolly surface of the flower.

899. Bends not—because of the light tread (a poetic fancy)

901. Charmed hand—the spell that binds her

908. Office best—work I like best.

913. Of precious cure—of valuable curative power.

914. Thrice—thrice was a significant number in magic

916. Next—touch. Venomed seat—enchanted chair

917. Glutinous—(Tr Epithet) sticky, tenacious.

921. Amphitrite—wife of Neptune, and goddess of the sea

923. Anchises' line—see note line 27

924-27 "May the tributaries of the Severn never fail to fill it with due supplies of water."

928. Singed—scorching

929 "Never dry up thy waters," or "the luxuriant foliage along thy banks"

931. Molten crystal—limpid water as clear as crystal

932. Billows—waves of the sea caused by the wind. They get bigger as the river approaches the sea.

433. Beryl—a kind of emerald. Golden ore—gold mines are actually found in Wales

934-37. The meaning of these lines is not quite clear Brydges takes head to mean the Severn and paraphrases these lines thus, "may you be crowded with many a tower and terrace on your lofty sides and here and there with groves of myrrh and cinamon upon thy banks." Keightly explains, "may thy head (banks) be crowned round with towers and be thou adorned with myrrh and cinamon upon thy banks."

938. Lend us grace—give us his mercy.

942 "Let there not be any unnecessary noise made until "

947. Your Father's residence—Ludlow Castle

949. Gratulate—congratulate.

950. Wished—for. Beside—besides

952 Jigs—an Irish English dance ; a quick lively dance

956. The stars grow high—(i.e., we are light) the stars appear to be more distant (high) at the approach of morning

957. "It is midnight"

958 Back—desist (that will do). Enough your play—there has been enough of your country dances

959 Sunshine holiday—*Cf. L'Alleg* 97-8.

960 Be—are. Without .. nod—without such forms of clumsy obeisance and awkward courtesy as those of shepherds and servants.

961-65. Other . . leas—"the dance to come is to be a lighter tripping in refined fashion, dainty as that which Mercury might have devised on some Greek meadow for the wood-nymph" (Masson) Other trippings—i.e., the graceful dance of the Lady and her brothers as compared with the heavy and unskilled dance of the shepherds Court guise—court fashion or refined style Mercury—the messenger of the gods, was the personification of agility and refinement. He was the first civiliser of human manners Mincing—tripping with short steps, lightly and gracefully Dryades—wood nymphs

968 Good—goodly, handsome.

969 Branches—i.e., of the parent-tree.

970. Timely tried—tested at a fitting time.

972. Assays—trials; tests, temptations.

973. Crown—vide note 19 Deathless praise—immortal fame.

974-75 To celebrate their triumph over "sensual folly and intemperance" by joining in a victorious dance. These lines give the moral of the poem.

977. Happy climes—the celestial regions, the land of the Blessed.

978. Day... ..eyes—the sun always shines. Sun is 'the eye of day'

980. Suck . . . air—"inhale the sweet and pure air."

982 Hesperus, etc.—vide note 1. 393 The three daughters of Hesperus were Aegle, Cynthia and Hesperia

983 Golden tree—the tree bearing golden apples which grew in the garden of the daughters of Hesperus. It was guarded by a dragon.

984. Crisped—curled. It applies to the leaves of the trees which cast the shade Spruce—dainty; gay

986. Graces—the three goddesses, daughters of Zeus, who enhanced and ennobled life's pleasures They were called Euphrosyne, Aglaia, and Thalia Hours—(Hærae) were the goddesses of the seasons.

989. Musky wing—wing (breezes) laden with fragrance.

990 Cedarn alleys - paths bordered by cedar trees The n in Cedarn has the force of of

991. Nard and Cassia—Cf Ps 48, "all thy garments smell of myrrh, aloes and cassia" Nard—or spikenard is an aromatic plant Cassia—an aromatic plant

992 Iris—goddess of the Rainbow. Humid—because the rainbow appears after rainfall.

993 Blow—cause or make to blossom.

995 Purpled scarf—i.e., the rainbow, which looks like a scarf embroidered with gold etc. (i.e., having many colours).

996. Drenches . . . dew—"Iris soaks with celestial moisture."

997. True--pure ; chaste. The spirit is going to speak of the nature of true love.

998. Hyacinth—the flower that was supposed to spring from the blood of Hyacinthus.

999. Adonis—the beautiful youth Adonis was killed while hunting by a wild boar, and was much lamented by the goddess Venus who loved him dearly. The gods were moved with pity and they allowed Adonis to pass six months every year on the earth with her to (an allegory of the annual revival of spring). Adonis was supposed he wounded every year and again restored to life. He had therefore two commemoration days - one of *lamentation*, and the other of *rejoicing*.

1000. Waxing—improving, getting.

1002. Assyrian queen—Venus identified with Astarte, a Syrian goddess. Venus is called the *Assyrian Queen* because she was first worshipped in Assyria

1003-4—i.e., the spiritual heavenly love symbolised by Cupid and Psyche is far above the pure sexual love symbolised by Venus and Psyche Sheen—brightness. Spangled—adorned with spangles, glittering Cupid... Psyche—Cupid, god of love and son of Venus, loved Psyche (human soul) and used to visit her In order to satisfy her curiosity as to who he was, Psyche one night, when Cupid was sleeping, brought a lamp to see him A drop of oil fell on Cupid, and he awoke and fled Psyche wandered from place to place seeking her lover, and she had to endure much persecution from Venus At last Jove pitied her and made her a goddess and the bride of Cupid "In this story Psyche represents the human soul, which is disciplined and purified by earthly misfortune and so fitted for the enjoyment of true happiness in heaven." (Bell) Notice the three gradations of love. (1) *Lust*, typified by Comus, (2) *Ordinary sexual love*, typified by Venus and Adonis, and (3) *High spiritual love*, typified by Cupid and Psyche.

1005. Sweet entranced—"in a state of delicious rapture"

1010. Blissful turns in his *Apology for Smectymnus* Milton has

the names of the twins of love as knowledge and virtue instead of youth and joy

1012. Now task—now that my task (*vide*. l 18) Smoothly—satisfactorily ; successfully ; safely.

1014 Green earth's end—"the limits of the world," which according to the ancients, seemed just beyond the straits of Gibraltar.

1015 "Where, at the horizon, the arched sky seems gradually to slope down towards the earth "

1017 To the horns of the crescent.

1018-23 The moral of the poem is summoned up in these concluding lines Virtue can make one truly free, both in body and mind, and can enable one to go into the very presence of God If one feels one's weakness, God will lend His helping hand.

1021 Sphery chime --"Music of the spheres" Higher chime—the Empyrean --the abode of God and the blessed.

1022-23 "A triumphant expression of that confidence in the invincibility of virtue when aided by Divine Providence, and therefore a fitting conclusion of the whole masque" (Bell)

Milton, when at Geneva, in 1639, wrote these two lines in the album of a Neapolitan refugee, named Cerdogni, and beneath them he wrote . —

"Cælum non animum muto dum trans mare curro" (i.e., when I cross the sea, I change the sky, but not my mind) implying that he always believed in the doctrine of virtue expressed in the above lines.

[THE END]

